

# ***The Netherlands Five Years after Beijing***

## **National Implementation Report**

Report on the policies carried out by the Dutch government  
in order to implement the Beijing *Platform for Action* (1995 - 2000).

The material posted here was provided to the Division for the Advancement of Women by the Government in response to the Secretary-General's Questionnaire on Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action. It has been made available in electronic format from the form received. In cases where it was not possible to reproduce charts and tables supplied, these can be obtained by contacting the Division for the Advancement of Women directly.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I	The Netherlands five years after Beijing .....	3
II	Developments since Beijing: implementation of the <i>Platform for Action</i> .....	9
II.1	Paid work, unpaid care and income .....	9
II.2	Education .....	16
II.3	Health .....	18
II.4	Violence against women in a human rights context .....	20
II.5	Redistribution of power and influence .....	21
II.6	Media and image-making .....	27
II.7	Sustainable development .....	28
III	Emancipation policy: a wide variety of instruments .....	29
III.1	Instruments based on legal obligations .....	29
III.2	Instruments designed to broaden support for emancipation .....	31
III.3	Instruments geared towards the support, study, monitoring and investigation of hidden discrimination .....	32
IV	National machinery and emancipation support structure .....	35
IV.1	National machinery .....	35
IV.2	The main actors in the emancipation support structure .....	37
IV.3	Financial framework for interdepartmental emancipation policy .....	40
V	Future developments .....	41

# I THE NETHERLANDS FIVE YEARS AFTER BEIJING

## I.1 INTRODUCTION

Shortly after the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, the Dutch government formulated its proposed policy on emancipation in the policy documents of the various ministries and the action programme 'Beijing, now and the future'<sup>1</sup>. In line with the results of the conference, these policy documents concluded that instead of further analysis of the emancipation issue or its aims, what was needed now was for these aims to be translated into specific action.

This view was further elaborated in subsequent years through annual advisory reports on emancipation policy, which the government sent to parliament each September together with the general budget. The practical realisation of an emancipation policy has now been taken up in every area of national government. Each ministry has outlined its proposed emancipation policy at its specific area in a policy document or advisory report on emancipation and submitted it to parliament. An emancipation monitor is currently being prepared in the form of a statistical overview to chart progress in areas centrally administered by the government. Since 1995, additional measures have been taken in the following areas: paid work, unpaid care and income, redistribution of power and decision-making, human rights of women (notably measures to prevent and combat violence against women), the daily routine in society, women and health and the implementation of equal opportunities policy in countries receiving development assistance from the Netherlands. The initiatives taken in these areas are described in detail in this report.

Since the Beijing conference, the Dutch government has intensified its two-tracked policy on emancipation. The first line of approach is to renew government emancipation policy. The second line of approach is to 'mainstream' or integrate emancipation aspects and insights into regular policy. Both approaches have deliberately sought unexpected angles and links with key contemporary social themes. On the basis of these approaches a broadening of the basis was being pursued. Full implementation will only be achieved by forging new alliances with partners beyond the circle of gender specialists, both within and outside government. Communication concerning emancipation has also sought to promote mutual interests such as the role of men in gender equality and the economic need for the private sector to investment in women.

Wherever mutual interests are served, the forging of new alliances has generally succeeded. Hence in a progressively older and better qualified labour market, companies are becoming increasingly attracted to a more highly skilled female workforce. This in turn makes it possible to tackle the issue of employment conditions which obstruct the combination of paid work and unpaid care. In short, progress on emancipation is achieved wherever it also serves the interests of other groups.

Clearly, international developments also play a positive role in emancipation policy in the Netherlands. Interaction between national and international policy has consolidated substantially since the Beijing conference. The insights and experience gained through national emancipation policy are being presented in international fora. At the same time, international agreements and themes are being studied for their possible impact on national policy. At international level, the Netherlands advocates reciprocity between national and international policy on emancipation, as it does in its own national policy. The same approach is reflected at European level. The Treaty of Amsterdam, for example, paves the way for the integration of equal opportunities policy into employment policy. The implementation of the *Platform for Action* and the beginning of mainstream initiatives launched recently by the UN are also encouraging non-gender specialists to give a well considered contribution. In short, emancipation policy is expanding to become part of the mainstream, and this is placing new demands on national machinery and existing instruments. The Co-ordinating State Secretary for Emancipation policy increasingly requires overviews, monitoring and analyses of trends, risks and opportunities, as well as a transparent and pragmatic working method for in which the implementation of policy intentions have a central place. The Dutch government has therefore decided to pursue its

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<sup>1</sup>The key areas of concern cited in the Beijing Platform for Action are: women and poverty, education and training of women, women and health, violence against women, women and armed conflict, women and the economy, women in power and decision-making, institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women, human rights of women, women and the media, women and the environment and the girl child.

co-ordinated emancipation policy by developing innovative initiatives for just two or three key themes each year. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and relevant ministries are involved as closely possible during the development of these initiatives so that the results can be integrated into regular policy wherever feasible.

The strategy pursued since Beijing will be continued in the coming years. During its second term in office, the government<sup>2</sup> set aside extra funding to expand facilities such as child care and stimulate experiments which would simplify the combination of paid work and unpaid care. A forward-looking strategy for emancipation is also being drafted for the period beyond the year 2000. The multi-year policy document to be published in the summer of 1999 will provide an initial indicator for policy beyond the year 2000 as well as an assessment of the trends, risks and opportunities facing the emancipation process. The government will use this document to plan its contribution to the Special session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

As part of the government's mainstreaming exercise, an action plan outlining the emancipation policy role of each ministry has been published under the overall supervision of the Co-ordinating State Secretary for Emancipation policy<sup>3</sup>. The action plan allocates at least three tasks to each ministry during the government's current term in office. It also contains agreements on evaluation and monitoring. A more detailed account of these future proposals is included at the end of this implementation report.

## **I.2 EMANCIPATION POLICY IN THE NETHERLANDS: THREE LEVELS OF APPROACH**

Emancipation policy in the Netherlands is distinguished at three levels: formal equality, material equality and the removal of structural and cultural obstacles. These three levels are interrelated and are designed to bring about fundamental changes within society.

In the Netherlands, the measures designed to achieve formal equality between women and men are now largely in place. In recent years, the government has been taking further steps to improve legislation on equal treatment. The independent Equal Treatment Commission handles complaints in this area and draws attention to any remaining disparities in the law or to inequalities indirectly arising from shortfalls in the law. The EU Directives on equal treatment also assist this process. Jurisprudence can be built up this way.

The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UN-Women's Convention) and, in the future, the optional protocol and the Treaty of Amsterdam will further strengthen the international framework for equal treatment. Within the framework of emancipation policy the government is currently improving the accessibility of legislation and jurisprudence.

Many initiatives are still required to achieve material equality between men and women. Until the goal of a balanced distribution of paid work and unpaid care and influence between women and men has been achieved, emancipation policy will continue to be needed.

In recent years, the emancipation process has moved away from a policy designed to eliminate social disparities, towards the recognition of diversity as a valid characteristic of society. The aim now is to bring about a complete cultural change within society. The involvement of women in traditionally male spheres of activity and vice versa is no longer simply seen as a matter of justice but also as a way of improving the overall quality of society. This places structural and cultural obstacles to gender equality in a new light.

Development co-operation activities also use the *Platform for Action* and the UN Women's Convention as a framework for their combined efforts to promote formal and material equality of women. Gender experts have now been appointed to the Dutch embassies. These experts have access to a special

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<sup>2</sup>The present coalition government served its first term in office between 1994 and 1998. It began its second four-year term in August 1998.

<sup>3</sup>At the previous government the political responsibility for the co-ordination of the emancipation policy was in the hands of the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment, currently it lies with the State Secretary for Social Affairs and Employment.

women's fund which they use to support women's movements in countries receiving aid, strengthen the emancipation capacity and infrastructure of partner governments, encourage increased participation by women in Dutch-funded aid programmes and ensure that the results of these programmes benefit women and men equally.

### **I.3 DEVELOPMENTS SINCE BEIJING**

#### **I.3.1 Diversity as a source of capacity**

For many years, the Dutch government's emancipation policy viewed women in terms of disadvantage the argument being that they had fewer opportunities than men. This approach effectively obstructed progress within emancipation policy since it took the male norm as its yardstick. Since Beijing, the emphasis has shifted to the need to preserve diversity yet without losing sight of the disadvantaged position of specific groups of women. The latter is particularly true for the Dutch Development Assistance Programme. The decision has been taken to prioritise the sectors that contribute to emancipation of women in countries receiving aid.

Whereas before, emancipation policy centred mainly on the status of women per se, it has now widened to cover concepts such as ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, culture and religion. The underlying rationale is now to encourage a positive appreciation of gender differences and to reject unjustified inequalities arising from these differences. It is now accepted that society is enriched through a recognition and optimisation of the differences between individuals and groups. Only then will potential talent be fully utilised.

Removing the obstacles that stand in the way of diversity will allow both women and men to play an equal role in *all* areas of society. This approach widens the issue of emancipation from one that addresses women alone to one which addresses society as a whole.

#### **I.3.2 Combining living spheres**

Both women and men must be given the opportunity to participate fully in the domestic sphere, the world of employment and the political and social sphere. Many changes are still needed to achieve this, both in the organisation of society and in its culture. The present government's coalition agreement<sup>4</sup> states that these changes must involve a reallocation and reappraisal of gender roles and a redefinition of the social status of women and men in the widest sense. The resulting policy is reflected in all areas of central government.

#### **I.3.3. Two-tracked strategy**

Both the content of policy and the way it is implemented have changed in emphasis since the Beijing conference. The government's existing two-track strategy has been intensified. The first track of policy is to improve analysis, implement policy proposals and carry out evaluation and monitoring in the field of emancipation. The second track of policy is to incorporate emancipation into regular policy, otherwise known as mainstreaming. Both strategies are designed to broaden the support base for emancipation policy, partly through the forging of new alliances.

In our information society, communication is an essential tool in achieving wider support for policy. The government has therefore always been careful to ensure that new initiatives promoting emancipation are accompanied by a targeted media communications strategy. Whether it is The Hague Declaration on preventing and combating trafficking in women or the launch of the Daily Routine Committee, government policy has always been to publicise these initiatives via the radio, newspapers and television. This communications strategy has worked in many instances. It has moved emancipation policy out of specialist fora and into the wider community, thereby greatly increasing its influence. This line of approach is being pursued in current policy.

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<sup>4</sup>The coalition agreement is the document setting out the present coalition government's political agenda for the next four years.

#### **I.3.4. National machinery and financial framework**

The government uses the national machinery available to it to help formulate policy and draft measures. However, an emancipation support structure outside government remains necessary if the process of change towards a society based on equal opportunities is to keep moving forward. The shift in emancipation policy away from analysis and towards implementation has resulted in a deliberate broadening of the number of actors involved. The national machinery is now also more specifically geared towards widening acceptance of emancipation policy among non-specialists. The government has been reviewing the emancipation support structure since 1995 with a view to broadening the basis of support and forging new alliances.

Apart from the individual ministry budgets, such as the budget for child care, funding for the government's interdepartmental emancipation policy is also available for the Daily Routine Incentive Scheme and for its regular subsidy policy.

#### **I.4. MAJOR TRENDS AFFECTING EMANCIPATION**

The social climate and attitudes to the status of women have changed radically in recent years. It is, for example, becoming increasingly common for women to play a fully-fledged role in the labour process, in education and in public administration. Formal equality between men and women in the Netherlands has made great strides; however, material equality still has a long way to go. There is still no balanced distribution of paid work and income between women and men. The same applies to unpaid care. Material inequality appears to be deeply rooted in the structure and culture of society, and its consequences remain a strong co-determinant in the lives of men and women.

##### **I.4.1 Paid work and unpaid care**

The shifts that have occurred in attitudes to the role of men and women, especially with regard to paid work and unpaid care, have made emancipation an important issue for society as a whole. In all the key areas of society, there is a growing awareness of these ongoing changes and of their far-reaching consequences. Over the next few years, the government will continue to develop its emancipation policy against the background of major demographic, economic, technological and social developments. This has brought the emancipation of women into close proximity with key policy areas, in terms of content as well as otherwise.

This is most clearly reflected in the government's socio-economic policy. One of the changes which has already been set in motion is the disappearance of the old 'social contract' based on the man as breadwinner and the woman as carer. For many years this contract was a major pillar of Dutch society. However, the disappearance of the 'breadwinner' model has not yet been fully replaced by a new, emancipated model, with all the risks that this involves.

For example, the rising proportion of women in the labour process is not yet balanced by a sufficient number of men performing unpaid care. Research has shown that although an increasing number of men want to work less, there is so far little evidence of this in practice. The incomes of most women are in any case not nearly large enough to allow them even to be economically self-sufficient (almost 50% of women work, yet they only account for 25% of the income of the working population), let alone build up a reasonable pension. In view of the rising average age of the population and the high divorce rate, this is creating a major threat of dependence by women on the state and/or of poverty. The promotion of women to senior positions is slowing down and a form of professional segregation remains. Since most unpaid work (i.e. care) is still performed by women, there is also a danger that, as the population continues to age, there will be progressively fewer people available to provide care (care-vacuum).

##### **I.4.2. Who will provide care in the 21st century?**

"Who will provide care in the 21st century?" is one of the key questions of the day. This question has prompted the government to increasingly focus its policy on ways to improve opportunities for men

and women to combine paid work and unpaid care and leisure pursuits. Emancipation policy in the Netherlands has been moving in this direction since the start of the renewing process in 1995, in conjunction with ongoing efforts to bring about cultural change, oppose discrimination and prevent violence against women.

In the meantime, the education system has been undergoing a silent revolution. In just under 20 years, the proportion of women in education (including at university level) has risen spectacularly. Not only have women closed the education gap with men, they frequently outperform their male counterparts, albeit that they are still underrepresented in technical subjects. It is therefore not surprising that the younger generation of girls is not overly attracted to the issue of emancipation. For them, equality no longer appears to be an issue. Moreover, the Netherlands offers good health care, has few teenage pregnancies and a low abortion rate. On the other hand, the age at which Dutch women give birth to their first child is among the world's highest. This again suggests that the differences between men and women only really start to become significant after the age of 30, namely when work and career are combined with child care. Research by organisations such as the Daily Routine Committee have found that child care facilities and the allocation of paid work and unpaid care in the Netherlands are not adequately geared towards combining these social responsibilities.

This is a major reason why the government's policy to promote equal distribution of paid work and unpaid care and care is targeted mainly at individuals aged between 30 and 50. Figures show that when women in this age group fall behind their male counterparts, the gap that opens up cannot subsequently be closed.

The prospects for young girls will also be considered during the forthcoming period. Despite all the changes that have occurred, the economic self-sufficiency they are expected to enjoy in the future still has no firm foundation, especially among less well-educated women. Concern for young people in policy is often synonymous with concern for problem youngsters (mainly boys). It is therefore important to address the role of girls in what is primarily a multicultural society. This role can be crucial in the creation of social cohesion in a changing society. Specific attention must therefore be given to the existing situation and future prospects of the younger generation, including girls from ethnic minority backgrounds.

#### **I.4.3. Violence against women in a human rights context**

One of the most distressing examples of human rights violations against women is violence. Research by, amongst others, the special UN Rapporteur on Violence against Women shows that physical, sexual and psychological violence against women is a widespread and serious global problem that occurs in all countries. The term 'violence against women' covers all types of violence, regardless of whether it is committed or tolerated by governments or private individuals.

At the instigation of the Co-ordinating Minister for Emancipation policy, together with the Minister of Justice, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister for Development Co-operation and the Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport, the previous administration took steps to further integrate policy on preventing and combating violence against women, including trafficking in women, with policy on protecting the human rights of women. The emphasis has thus shifted away from a wholly negative strategy (opposing sexual violence against women) towards a more positive co-ordinated, multidisciplinary approach (respecting the human rights of women partly by preventing and combating various forms of violence against women). This line of policy will be pursued over the coming years.

#### **I.5. FUTURE OUTLOOK**

Policy for the coming years will be developed along the lines outlined above. Since the new policy will be discussed in more detail at the end of this report, a few brief remarks will suffice here.

To begin with, various proposals from the previous administration will be implemented. This will include studying the possibility of setting up an equal treatment information centre. A national rapporteur on trafficking in women is likely to be appointed this autumn.

Secondly, the current administration has adopted a number of recommendations issued during the term of office of the previous administration. For example, the recommendations put forward by the external Daily Routine Committee lead to the decision of the government to set aside NLG 60 million over the next four years to finance experiments at local level and in the private sector to make it easier for men and women to combine their social responsibilities. This initiative is known as the Daily Routine Incentive Scheme. The government will also be taking further steps to make it easier for men and women to take leave to pursue care-related duties.

Thirdly, this summer the government will be presenting a multi-year policy document assessing the trends, risks and opportunities facing the emancipation process over the next decade. These forward-looking surveys will be used to give initial direction to policy in the period beyond the year 2000. The multi-year policy document will be presented to a number of official advisory bodies with a request to submit advice to the government on the proposed direction of policy beyond the year 2000. NGOs will also be invited to provide their own input to the proposed future scenario for emancipation policy. These recommendations and contributions will then be included in the Netherlands' contribution to the Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations in June 2000. Once the focus of international policy has been fixed during this session, the Netherlands' emancipation policy for the 21st century will be given more definitive form.

Finally, a few words about why this report was compiled. The Second CEDAW report (November 1998) gives the UN Secretariat much of the information it needs concerning the evolution of emancipation policy in the Netherlands since Beijing. The UN Secretariat will no doubt use this report to help it prepare for the Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations. The Dutch government nevertheless felt it was important to compile a national report outlining the implementation of the Beijing *Platform for Action* based on the guidelines drawn up by the UN secretary-general (questionnaire). This national report, which provides insight into and forms part of preparations for the special UN session, was drafted under the auspices of the Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy of Emancipation Policy Co-ordination and was co-ordinated with the various ministries concerned via the Co-ordination Committee for Emancipation Policy.

## II DEVELOPMENTS SINCE BEIJING: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLATFORM FOR ACTION

### II.1 PAID WORK, UNPAID CARE AND INCOME

The emancipation of women has had significant and irreversible consequences for attitudes to the status of women and men and for the way in which society is structured. Both sexes are playing an increasingly equal role in various sectors of society. More women are entering paid work and unpaid care is no longer exclusively a female preserve. Divisions between what were once regarded as traditionally male and female spheres of activity are now far less strictly determined. They have been replaced by the search for a balanced distribution of paid work, unpaid care, income and decision-making between men and women.

#### II.1.1. Labour market participation and income

The participation of women on the labour market and their degree of participation still lags far behind that of men. This is true of almost all aspects of participation, including jobs, professions and job grades. Women also work fewer hours per week than men. This shorter average working week and shorter employment history (due to temporary career interruptions) continues to undermine the position of women on the labour market and their ability to progress to more senior or management posts.

There has been a perceptible rise in the participation of women on the labour market since the 1970s, from 34% in the mid-1970s to 54% in 1999. This percentage is likely to rise even further. This trend is set to continue since girls are now enjoying the same level of education as boys and this is giving women an equal starting position on the labour market.

Labour market participation among both men and women is higher the younger and better educated they are. The relatively high level of participation among women over the age of 55 is due to the increased participation among women as a whole.

Table: *Net labour market participation by 15-64 year olds by gender and educational level (%)*

	WOMEN			MEN		
	1985	1990	1997	1985	1990	1997
Primary education	12	17	19	41	49	47
Junior education	28	30	33	68	67	67
Senior education	43	50	57	77	77	80
Higher professional education	56	63	67	87	87	82
University education	68	71	81	89	86	89
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>74</b>

Source: Emancipation Yearbook 1998, page 132

As the table shows, the percentage of women in paid work is closely linked to their educational level. The labour market participation of unskilled women is exceptionally low compared to their more highly skilled counterparts. In 1997, only 19% of women with a primary education were in paid work compared with 81% of women with university degrees. The percentage of highly skilled mothers returning to the labour market following the birth of a child is approximately twice as high on average as the percentage of unskilled mothers. The existing disparity in labour market participation between skilled and unskilled women before they leave work to have children widens even further afterwards. So when women - especially unskilled and semi-skilled women - leave the labour market to have children, they often never return. This also has negative economic repercussions in the form of a narrower economic base for society and a smaller return on investment in women's education.

The unutilised labour market potential of women is far greater than that of men. Unemployment among women in 1996 was 9%, twice as high as that among men (5%). This official percentage

almost certainly does not reflect the high level of hidden unemployment among women. This is caused by the fact that they temporarily leave work to have children or because they have not recently been looking for paid work.

Because there are fewer women in paid work, fewer women have access to an independent income than men. Even when they do engage in paid work, women still earn substantially less than men. This is partly due to the large number of female part-time workers and the relatively low job grades which women tend to occupy. In 1996 women earned 76% of the gross average hourly wage of men. The differences in pay between men and women are due to differences in the nature of the jobs done by men and women, and in their personal characteristics. These differences in job characteristics were extrapolated from a study of gender distribution between the various economic sectors, job types, job grades and full-time/part-time work. Women are overrepresented in the health care and catering sectors, largely perform administrative and caring roles, are more often found in junior posts and are six times more likely to have a part-time job than men. If gross wages are adjusted to take account of these characteristics, then the average female wage is found to be 7% below that of men.

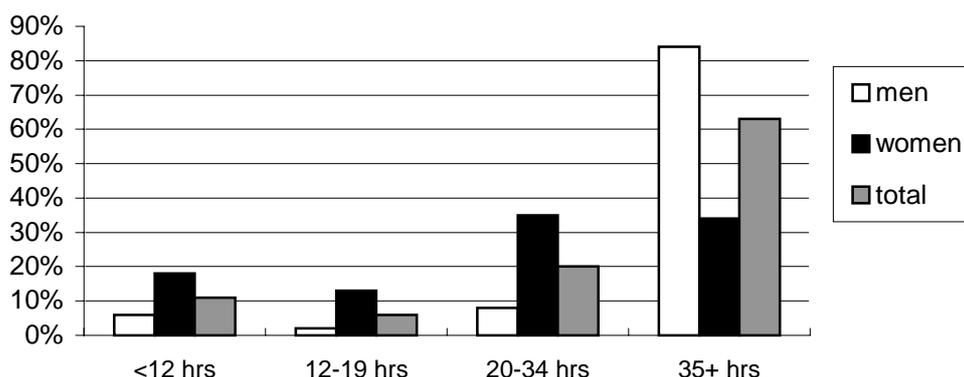
The 1998 Yearbook shows that in 1996, women accounted for approximately 25% of the total income of the working population. So although women make up around half the population aged between 15 and 65, their combined earnings only account for a quarter. This disparity, in which 50% of the working population earns just 25% of the overall income generated, is due to the combination of a lower number of women participating in the labour market, the large number of women in part-time work and their lower average hourly wage.

The differences between women and men are reflected not only in the amount of time they spend on domestic care but above all in their respective levels of economic self-sufficiency and their share in the household income. The term 'economic self-sufficiency' is generally defined as income from paid work which is higher than the average state benefit paid to a single person. The government coalition agreement states that the new tax system must do more to promote emancipation and economic self-sufficiency as well as making adequate provision for the existing category of sole earners.

### **II.1.2. Part-time work**

Part-time employment appears to be one way of combining paid work and unpaid care, especially for women. Government policy is geared towards increasing the number of part-time jobs to encourage more men to work part-time and to promote a fairer distribution of part-time employment between men and women. Research has shown however that although men are apparently keen to work shorter hours, most companies are unwilling to allow them to do so. Not only is it still considered socially unacceptable to express a desire to work part-time, employees also still find that working part-time adversely affects their career prospects. Specific measures are therefore being taken to encourage men to use the facilities available for combining paid work and unpaid care. Existing preconceptions about part-time work, such as fear of loss of status and the belief that one's own job cannot be done on a part-time basis, appear to be deep-seated. The social partners also have a crucial role to play in overcoming these obstacles.

Diagram: **Active working population by length of working week, 1997**



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Source: 1997 Labour Force Survey

Not only is net labour market participation greater among men than among women, the relationship between having children and participation in paid employment also leads to disparities between men themselves. The labour participation of married and cohabiting fathers is significantly higher than that of single men (91% compared with 65%). The part-time factor also creates a major disparity between women and men. Also, men tend more often to engage in part-time work when they are younger (as students supplementing their grants) or older (when they have entered semi-retirement), whereas most women in part-time jobs are in their middle years. Part-time work therefore plays a different role in the employment history of each sex. For men, part-time work is an incidental phenomenon, while for women it is part of a standard working pattern.

good practice: **Commemoration of the 1898 National Exhibition of Women's Work**

A hundred years ago, women's work was given national coverage throughout the Netherlands for the first time by the 1898 National Exhibition of Women's Work. Despite the limited means of communication then available, the exhibition drew more than 90,000 visitors. A separate room was set aside for almost every sector in which women were employed. Never before had there been a comparable survey of, or insight into, the extent and significance of the paid and unpaid work performed by women.

The National Exhibition of Women's Work led to an unprecedented level of interest among the public and national press. Looking back, it can be seen not just as a catalyst for the first wave of emancipation in the Netherlands, but also as a milestone in the history of women's work.

The exhibition was commemorated in 1998. One of the key topics raised was which measures were necessary in order to simplify the combination of paid work and unpaid care.

**II.1.3. Combination of paid work and unpaid care**

The redistribution of care tasks between men and women is one of the preconditions for a more equitable distribution of paid work. This redistribution is still impeding the progress of the emancipation process. Dutch society was traditionally structured according to the 'breadwinner' model, in which the man went out to work and the women performed unpaid work in the home. This model led to the underutilisation of both the employment potential of women and the care potential of men. To encourage this potential among boys, the first stage of secondary education now includes lessons in life skills. This initiative is designed to increase interest among boys in care and the responsibilities of carers.

Since 1995 the rate at which paid work and unpaid care has been redistributed between the sexes has been accelerating. This is due to social developments, the rise in education levels among women and the measures which have been taken to promote emancipation. For many decades, Dutch society was based on the breadwinner model in which the man goes out to work and the woman takes care of the home. Since then, the 'one and a half earner' model has become more common. In this model, the man works full-time and the woman part-time. Both models however fail to live up to the goal of an equitable distribution of paid work and unpaid care between men and women. A third model, in which

both partners work three-quarters of the time, lies at the heart of the Combination Scenario described below.

#### **II.1.3.1. Committee on Future Scenarios for the Redistribution of Unpaid Care**

In 1994 the Co-ordinating Minister Emancipation policy established the Committee on Future Scenarios for the Redistribution of Unpaid Care. The Committee's task was to outline four future scenarios for the redistribution of unpaid care in the year 2010. These scenarios had to make clear how the organisation of unpaid care would evolve in relation to paid work to ensure that in time unpaid care would be shared equally by men and women.

<b>good practice: <i>Committee on Future Scenarios for the Redistribution of Unpaid Care</i></b>
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In 1995 the Committee presented four future scenarios. Both the Committee and the government expressed a preference for the Combination Scenario. This scenario envisages the creation of an even balance between unpaid care and paid work by both men and women. The unusual feature of the Combination Scenario is that it changes the status of women as well as that of men. Men and women will not achieve greater equality simply by having women join men in full-time employment, equality will be achieved only if paid work, unpaid care and income are shared equally between men and women.
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At present, paid work and unpaid care tasks are still not equally shared by women and men. There are three key areas in which the proposed redistribution of paid work, unpaid care and income must be given more concrete form, namely the combination of paid work and unpaid care, increased economic self-sufficiency and higher incomes for women and the positive revaluation of care<sup>5</sup>.

#### **II.1.3.2. Daily Routine Committee**

In 1996, in response to the scenarios - notably the Combination Scenario - presented by the Committee on future scenarios, the Co-ordinating Minister for Emancipation policy established the Daily Routine Committee. This Committee was asked to come up with proposals to make it easier for people wanting to participate more fully in all areas of life to combine paid work and unpaid care. The existing structure of society does not facilitate the combination of these various spheres of life, including the combination of paid work and unpaid care. Many people have a daily struggle in trying to combine these activities.

The Committee took the Combination Scenario as its basic framework. It eventually produced recommendations for the better co-ordination of paid work, care facilities, education, transport and spatial planning. It also put forward recommendations for experiments in this area.

<b>good practice: <i>Daily Routine Committee</i></b>
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The Daily Routine Committee also gave special attention to life in rural areas and the specific problems associated with the combination of activities in different spheres of life. The Committee drew up a step-by-step plan to help municipalities set up projects designed to facilitate the combination of paid work and unpaid care. The plan is based on initiatives to co-ordinate times and locations, for example by changing the opening hours of schools, shops, child care facilities and other provisions and by co-ordinating (public) transport and spatial planning
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The Daily Routine Committee has used its budget and its networks to generate maximum publicity through the media. It has to some extent been able to do this due to the fact that it was asked to adopt an independent, non-aligned stance in order to stimulate public debate as effectively as possible. It was also given the scope to set up local experiments and to conduct its own communication strategy via a communications agency.

<sup>5</sup>Emancipation Policy Paper, 1996, page 22.

#### **II.1.4. Leave facilities**

During the previous administration, various steps were taken to ensure that employees of all ages could participate fully in the labour market. A variety of proposals were submitted to encourage people to take leave. The new administration is currently promoting leave-taking in the following ways:

##### **II.1.4.1. Pregnancy and maternity leave**

Female employees are entitled to a total of 16 weeks' paid leave which can be taken on a flexible basis. The entitlement to statutory sick pay lasts 16 weeks, regardless of when the child is born.

##### **II.1.4.2. Parental leave**

The Parental Leave Act was amended on 1 July 1997 to allow parents to take full-time leave. The original qualifying condition of a 20-hour working week has been scrapped so that part-time employees who work less than a 20-hour week are also entitled to parental leave. The age limit of children being cared for has been raised to eight. Over 20% of women who are entitled to unpaid parental leave make use of this entitlement, compared to 4% of men.

##### **II.1.4.3. Career break**

The Career Break (Financing) Act took effect on 1 October 1998. Under certain conditions, this Act provides for the payment of an allowance to private and public sector employees who want to interrupt their career to perform care tasks or take study leave. One of the qualifying conditions is that a temporary replacement must be appointed.

##### **II.1.4.4. Compassionate leave**

Employees who are prevented from performing their work through exceptional circumstances over which they have no control can take compassionate paid leave. The circumstances concerned must be such that the employee needs to take leave to make the necessary arrangements. Serious difficulties relating to the combination of paid work and unpaid care could also necessitate a brief period of compassionate leave.

##### **II.1.4.5. Adoption leave**

One of the adoptive parents is entitled to up to four weeks' paid leave in the interests of 'parent-child bonding'. This form of leave will be regulated in the Work and Care Act. Parents will also be entitled to an allowance during adoption leave. Like the maternity allowance, this will be drawn from the General Unemployment Fund in the case of employees and by the Invalidity Fund (self-employed Persons) in the case of the self-employed.

##### **II.1.4.6. Building up a leave allowance fund**

The government will be encouraging people to build up a leave allowance fund by applying a 'reversal rule' similar to that used in the build-up of pension rights. Under the scheme, payment of tax and social insurance contributions on that proportion of earnings allocated to the leave allowance fund can be postponed until the time when leave is actually taken. The proposed scheme allows employees to set aside up to 10% of their salaries and to postpone payment of the relevant tax and social insurance contributions until a later date. Employees can save for up to six months' full-time leave.

##### **II.1.4.7. Study on the future of paid care leave**

The government has commissioned a survey on the possibility of introducing an entitlement to paid care leave. This survey was announced in the government coalition agreement. It will examine whether a statutory right to paid care leave can be introduced, and if so, under what conditions, taking into account the interests of employers.

The current administration is now taking steps to combine and co-ordinate existing statutory leave schemes. Possible options are being worked out in a Work and Care Act. This is discussed in more detail in chapter VI (Future developments).

#### **II.1.5. Child care**

In 1996 a new tax incentive was created for employers providing child care facilities for their staff.

Since 1 January 1999, such companies have been able to claim back 30% of their net costs - that is, the cost price minus the parental contribution - under the Salaries Tax and Social Security Contributions (Reduced Remittances) Act. A growing proportion of child care facilities are hired out to companies wanting to offer such facilities to their staff, often on the strength of collective labour agreements between employers and trade unions. Company-funded child care facilities provide a necessary source of supplementary income alongside government funding. The same period has also seen a gradual increase in the parental contribution. Although in absolute terms the share of public funding has increased, in relative terms it has declined (parents 42%, government 33%, private sector 25%). The disadvantage of company child care facilities is that they do not take into account the child care needs of women who are not (yet) in paid work, who are not covered by a collective labour agreement or who are working in sectors for which no collective provision has been made.

At the end of 1997, some 89,000 child care places had been created for children up to the age of 12, and 140,000 children are now benefiting from child care facilities<sup>6</sup>. An incremental budget of NLG 160 million has been set aside for the expansion of out-of-school care facilities (4-12 year olds). This has been used to create 20,000 new child care places over a four-year period, starting in 1997. Since 1996 a structural allocation of NLG 85 million from the poverty alleviation budget has been used to provide child care for single parents living on benefit, who are attending courses or accept part-time or full-time work.

The 1998 government coalition agreement pledges an extra financial allocation for child care as a way of increasing labour market participation. This extra funding will be used to expand the capacity of child care organisations to meet rising demand for places. Child care subsidies will be progressively and structurally increased by NLG 250 million by the year 2002. Tax incentives will also be introduced either to make child care more affordable for parents or to encourage employers to offer child care facilities to their staff during collective labour agreement negotiations (structural allocation of NLG 150 million).

#### **II.1.6. Poverty**

Even in the Netherlands, certain groups are affected by poverty and social exclusion. If there is little opportunity for these individuals to improve their personal circumstances, their work or level of income, they face a significant risk of material deprivation. This is often followed by social isolation. Individuals who are forced to live on benefit generally find it difficult or impossible to secure employment.

Women are at greater risk of poverty than men. Regardless of the prevailing economic situation, there are a number of reasons why women in particular find it difficult to secure work and therefore end up living in poverty. One of these reasons is that following divorce, women are forced to live on social security. This happens because they either have no employment history or no recent work experience, usually because they have had to take care of children and have therefore been less readily available to work. Combining paid work and unpaid care is therefore a problem. Another stumbling block is their often low level of education.

<b>good practice: <i>Adult education</i></b>
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Various projects have been started up in the Netherlands for women with a low level of education who may additionally be living on benefit and have children to care for. This includes adult education projects. Adult education ('lifelong learning') is an important way of helping adults to make up for the education they lack. Vocational colleges for women which run practical job-related courses are an
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<sup>6</sup>The Netherlands has a population of 15,654,200 (1998), 24.3% of whom (approx. 3,803,970), are under the age of 19.

|| especially effective way of helping women (especially those from ethnic minority backgrounds) to meet their specific training needs. ||

## II.2 EDUCATION

In the Netherlands, education is compulsory for boys and girls between the ages of 5 and 16. Pupils can obtain an allowance to cover some of their study costs and from the age of 16 they can get help with school fees. Students under the age of 27 may, under certain circumstances, qualify for student support in the form of a basic or supplementary grant. There are plans to raise the age threshold to 30.

There is no separate law in the Netherlands to encourage more girls and women to continue in education. There are, however, activities designed to combat truancy and premature school leaving among boys and girls. Dropping out of school is in fact more common among boys than among girls in the Netherlands. Since the 1990s, government policy to reduce dropout rates has concentrated on three interrelated goals: a basic qualification for all, a consistent approach and co-operation at regional level. Approximately 10% of pupils leaving secondary education do so without a qualification for their last course of study.

### II.2.1. Education levels

On average, the education level of the population as a whole has progressively improved. However, the education level of women is still lower than that of men on the whole. Girls in post-secondary education have largely closed the education gap among the younger generation due to the high level of participation.

Table: **Participation in full-time education, 1997-1998 (%)**

	MEN		WOMEN	
	1993/1994	1997/1998	1993/1994	1997/1998
<b>16 year-olds</b>	94.4	91.8	93.4	94.1
<b>19 year-olds</b>	55.4	56.6	54.5	57.6
<b>22 year-olds</b>	29.5	32.3	24.4	28.7
<b>25 year-olds</b>	11.1	11.8	7.5	9.1

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science Key Statistics, 1999

Participation in education beyond compulsory school age has shown a progressive rise in recent years, especially among women. As a result, women around the age of 18 are now actually overrepresented in full-time education. Women above the age of 20 are still underrepresented, however, but this is partly due to the more rapid progression of women through the education process (in other words, they take less time on average to complete their studies).

Although equal numbers of women and girls participate in the various forms of education and perform as well as - and in some cases better than - their male counterparts, their choice of study reflects an imbalance. In the Netherlands, the number of women and girls opting for technical subjects is lower than in other West European countries. In 1993, Technology and IT studies were included as additional subjects in the first stage of secondary education to encourage more women and girls to study technical subjects. Life skills are now also being taught in secondary schools to generate more interest in care and in the responsibilities of carers among boys.

In an effort to widen the educational base of young people, four subject combinations have been introduced in the upper years of senior general secondary education (HAVO) and pre-university education (VWO). They consist of one art, one social science and two science combinations. All of these subject combinations will include mathematics, the precise content of which will depend largely on the focus of the overall subject combination. The Science and Technology and Science and Health combinations have been introduced to attract more girls to the sciences.

good practice: ***Stimulating Women and technology***

The *Women and Technology Action Plan 1995-1998* is designed to encourage more girls and women to opt for careers in engineering and technology. The Ministries of Economic Affairs, Education, Culture and Science and of Social Affairs and Employment fund relevant projects. The latest findings suggest that the problems in the sphere of 'women and technology' are due not so much to the negative attitude to technology among women, but rather to the following factors:

- The fact that women are unfamiliar with technical courses and technological industries;
- The negative image of technical courses and technological industries in general;
- The fact that the organisation and culture of technology are difficult for women to enter.

Axis, a consortium of employers, government and training providers, was set up in 1998 as a national platform for science and technology in education and the workplace. The issue of 'women and technology' is given express attention.

In addition to the *Action Plan*, a 'techno-mentoring' pilot project, providing mentors to advise and assist women studying technical subjects, has been set up. Its purpose is to increase the number of women and girls opting for technical subjects. Primary schools are being encouraged to incorporate technology into the curriculum.

Girls from ethnic minority backgrounds generally have a low level of post-primary education. 36% of ethnic minority girls finish their education at secondary vocational level, compared with 13% of girls from Dutch cultural backgrounds. However, girls from ethnic minority groups tend to perform better across the board than boys from ethnic minorities. They also have slightly better job prospects than ethnic minority boys.

Students from ethnic minority backgrounds are seriously underrepresented in higher education. Only around 6% of ethnic minority school-leavers have a higher professional qualification, compared with 13% of school-leavers in general. An even smaller percentage of ethnic minority school-leavers has a university degree. In 1994, the government established the Expertise Centre for Ethnic Minority Students in Higher Education (ECHO) to encourage the participation of ethnic minority students in higher education. The centre helps higher education institutions to promote the recruitment of ethnic minority students into higher education and to assist their progression through the higher education system. ECHO is given an annual budget of NLG 4 million to support projects within universities and colleges of higher professional education.

One important aspect for policy is the recognition that the existing imbalances between men and women in education are not solely due to stereotypical subject choices but also to other factors, such as expectations concerning the culture of future places of employment, the ability to work part-time and the anticipated availability of child care. See chapter II.1.1.

### **II.2.2. Women in management posts in education**

The number of women occupying senior posts in education and research is proportionally very low. In 1997, for example, a mere 5% of professors were women and only 7.5% were senior lecturers. The picture is similarly bleak in the other sectors. Correcting the severe underrepresentation of women in education management has been a key goal of emancipation policy in education for many years. On 7 March 1997, the Proportional Representation of Women in Managerial Posts in Education Act took effect. It is designed to help correct the imbalance of men and women in management and senior positions in educational establishments throughout the field of education from primary schools to universities. The main thrust of these measures is to encourage educational establishments to review their personnel policies and to conduct a more structural policy aimed at improving the status of women. Institutions in which women are underrepresented in management posts must compile a strategy document giving the target figures they are working towards to increase the number of women in management posts and describing the specific measures they will be taking to meet these figures.

## **II.3 HEALTH**

Improving access to adequate, affordable and widely available health care and welfare provisions is given considerable attention in the Netherlands, not just for the population in general but also for specific groups. Monitoring the existing situation of women in all areas of health will make it possible to eradicate discrimination. Through the shaping of policy the specific needs of women can be taken into account.

### **II.3.1. Women's Health Services**

The Dutch government has recognised the existence of gender-specific differences in health for some time. This is reflected in the measures and subsidies which focus on women's health services. Emphasis is given to integrating services for women into regular care provision. For health care to be effective, it is crucial for women and men to have access to care which caters for their specific problems. The role and social significance of gender has always been at the centre of care provision for women. This makes the women's health services an important instrument in improving the quality of care in general and in achieving customised care.

In 1992, the five-year Work Programme on Women's Health Services was introduced to oversee the integration of services for women into regular care. This programme centred on various policy spearheads covering a range of issues such as family doctors, sexual violence, acquired expertise, mental health, self-help for women (quality control and financing) and public information. Until the end of March 1999, a special steering group was responsible for encouraging the ongoing integration of care for women into public health and welfare policy. The steering group, which was headed by an independent chairman, consisted of representatives and insurers from the various national organisations in the regular health care sector, the social services and the somatic health care sector, the Health Care Inspectorate and organisations representing patients. Organisations involved with women's health services, medical care for women and self-help for women were appointed as advisers.

Evaluations have shown that while the integration process is now well under way, women's health services are still not a structural part of regular health care. On the other hand, progress has clearly been made in generating support, familiarising regular health care institutions with the health services specifically for women and promoting co-operation between regular and independent care institutions. Demand for training is also rising. Despite this growing interest, however, there still appear to be major bottlenecks. These include the image of the women's health services, lack of strong management and failure to create a structural link between this type of care and quality policy. The term 'women's health services' still appears to have certain associations, generates resistance and can be interpreted in several ways. Discussions concerning the women's health services as a key instrument in improving the overall quality of care are still ongoing. The government must therefore continue for the time being to take steps to promote the women's health services.

### **II.3.2. Women and AIDS**

In 1995 the Dutch Mental Health Federation carried out a study of the situation of HIV positive women in the Netherlands. The study drew attention to the fact that there was no social network for women with HIV/AIDS, as a result of which these women live in even greater isolation than their male counterparts. There are several reasons for this. They include: motherhood, family situation, prostitution, (former) drug use, the need to care for a partner, the need to care for children and parents and material deprivation. Women have a tendency to try to solve their own problems and a reluctance to ask for help. They also have low expectations regarding the kind of help they are likely to receive and some have had negative experiences with help providers.

good practice: *The Dutch AIDS Foundation*

The AIDS Foundation finances projects relating to women and AIDS. It has issued an information folder on HIV and sexually transmitted diseases, which focuses special attention on preventing sexually transmitted diseases and the spread of HIV among women. A further training programme on HIV infection and pregnancy has also been launched for midwives and obstetricians. The Foundation has also been allocated a research and development budget to assist the prevention and treatment of seropositives/AIDS and to improve the quality of life of AIDS sufferers. The AIDS Policy Committee and the AIDS Research Co-ordination Committee assist the AIDS Foundation in this work. The AIDS Foundation also has a signalling and co-ordination function and is involved in a documentation centre and in the AIDS telephone information line.

### II.3.3. Sexual and reproductive rights

During the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing, the Netherlands called for the recognition of sexual and reproductive rights based on the perspective and needs of girls and women. The term 'sexual rights' is also expressly taken to include the elimination of discrimination based on sexual orientation. For the Netherlands, this means working towards a situation in which individuals can participate on an equal footing in all social spheres, regardless of their sexual orientation. The special interests of lesbian women are a specific aspect of the government's gay rights policy. This policy is co-ordinated by the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

The UN Women's Convention contains provisions designed to offer protection from violence. These provisions can be used in turn to draft parameters to protect the sexual and reproductive rights of women (and men). The term 'reproductive rights' implies that women are free to decide for themselves if and when they want to have children. It also gives women the freedom to determine their own sexual and reproductive behaviour based on their own personal predilections and beliefs. Access to information and contraception is an essential precondition for this.

The difficulties associated with combining paid work and unpaid care appear to be leading to a decline in the birth rate. In the Netherlands, the average age at which women have their first child has risen to 29<sup>7</sup>, the highest in the world. More highly educated women tend to postpone having children until they have secured a firm foothold on the labour market and have good prospects of combining paid work with unpaid care responsibilities.

### II.3.4. Freedom of sexual orientation

Freedom of sexual orientation is becoming increasingly widely accepted in Dutch society. The coalition agreement explicitly includes statutory measures governing homosexual marriage. This also makes it easier to target specific groups such as ethnic minorities and the elderly. Against this background, the government has commissioned research on the status of homosexual and lesbian elderly in the Netherlands. This research showed that the status of some older lesbian women is worse than the general status of older persons in the Netherlands, especially in terms of their income and physical well-being.

#### good practice: **Registered domestic partnerships**

The legislation governing registered domestic partnerships, which took effect on 1 January 1998, is an extension of sexual and reproductive rights. This new law is not a response to international developments and conventions but to social developments within the Netherlands itself. Registered domestic partnerships have the same status as marriages and carry with them largely the same rights and obligations. They are intended for two individuals of the same sex who cannot marry or for two individuals of different sexes who do not wish to marry. The main difference between registered domestic partnerships and marriage is the relationship to children. Unlike marriage, a registered domestic partnership does not automatically imply a relationship with any children that may be born.

<sup>7</sup>CBS, 1999 Statistical Yearbook, page 66.

## **II.4 VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN A HUMAN RIGHTS CONTEXT**

An extreme form of social inequality between men and women is the existence of various forms of violence against women. At the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993, the human rights of women were declared an inalienable, integral and indivisible part of universal human rights. The Dutch government is taking active steps to uphold universal human rights and fundamental freedoms since it believes that women can only improve their status if they are fully able to exercise these rights. The 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) prompted the Dutch government to give extra attention to the theme of the human rights of women in its national and international policy.

To uphold the human rights of women, the Dutch government wishes to integrate its policy on preventing and combating violence against women more fully with regular legislation and policy. As part of this strategy, the Netherlands is supporting the introduction of an individual right of complaint through an optional protocol to the UN Women's Convention. The Commission on the Status of Women has adopted this in March 1999. The Netherlands played an active role at international level in bringing about this protocol.

Since launching these initiatives to prevent and eliminate violence against women, including trafficking in women, the Netherlands has been actively contributing to international follow-up initiatives. These initiatives tie in with the EU's joint action programme to combat trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation of children and with EU policy to combat violence against children, young people and women.

The Netherlands also actively support new initiatives and the implementation of policy on preventing and combating violence against women and children and trafficking in women by the Council of Europe's Steering Committee for Equality between Women and Men. This includes the development of a draft recommendation to the Committee of Ministers on the prevention and combating of trafficking in human beings and the sexual exploitation of children.

Within the framework of the United Nations, the Netherlands is arguing for closer co-operation between the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the UN Human Rights Committee. It also actively supports the work of the UN Special Rapporteur on violence against women and the UN Special Rapporteur on traditional practices, affecting the health of women and girls. Since Beijing, the Netherlands has continued to call for a specific ban on discrimination and violence based on sexual orientation, both within the UN and the EU.

Considerable knowledge and experience has been acquired at national level on the prevention and combating of violence against women. Violence against women is also widespread in the Netherlands. The vast majority of cases handled by organisations providing shelter and assistance to women involve violence of a sexual nature. Almost half the women who apply to these organisations are from ethnic minority backgrounds.

### **II.4.1. Prevention of sexual violence**

Between 1991 and 1995, a public information campaign to assist the prevention of sexual violence was launched in the context of emancipation policy under the slogan 'Sex is natural but never self-evident'. The aim of the campaign was to:

- Encourage discussion on the problem of sexual violence;
- Raise awareness among men and boys of the existence of male and female sexual stereotypes;
- Raise awareness among men and boys of the effects of these stereotypical images on their own expectations and behaviour in (sexual) interaction with girls and women;
- Raise awareness among men and boys of the significance of these stereotypical images as a context and breeding ground for a wide variety of forms of sexual violence;
- Help alter stereotypical images and their resulting behaviour.

The campaign, which was evaluated in 1997, consisted of a two-tracked policy: mass media communications and an 'intermediaries' strategy. During the five-year period of the campaign, a wide

range of instruments was used, including a magazine for young people, a brochure, TV messages, advertisements and posters. Research shows that the campaign generated considerable media interest. This was presumably partly due to the fact that the topic was a novel one for a campaign of this kind.

The evaluation also showed that on average, two-thirds of the Dutch population was in some way exposed to the campaign. Exposure among the primary target group was even as high as 70%. Those who had seen the campaign discussed the issue more widely, felt more committed to it and had a better understanding of sexual violence. The attitudes of young people who had seen the campaign were changed for the better, in contrast to those who had had no exposure to it.

#### **II.4.2. Statutory measures to combat violence against women**

In the Netherlands, various measures were taken to create a legal framework to combat violence against women and girls.

##### **II.4.2.1. Child pornography**

On 1 February 1996 the Child Pornography Act came into force, followed by guidelines from the Public Prosecutor. The Act focuses on the protection of minors against sexual abuse. Article 240b of the Criminal Code was amended to incorporate the new law. The sentence for disseminating and/or displaying sexual images of persons under the age of 16 has been increased to four years for a single offence and to six years for more structural and repeated offences. A maximum fine of NLG 100,000 can also be imposed.

##### **II.4.2.2. Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (Provisional Scheme) Act**

The introduction of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (Provisional Scheme) Act on 1 April 1995 radically altered the status of victims during criminal proceedings by substantially widening the scope for compensation for material and non-material damage. The Victim Support Guidelines - a more detailed elaboration of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Fund (Provisional Scheme) Act - state that when providing victim support, the police and public prosecution service must always give due consideration to the interests of victims and that victims must be treated in a correct fashion by support organisations.

##### **II.4.3. Sexual harassment in sports**

The national sporting umbrella organisation NOC\*NSF (Netherlands Olympic Committee and Sports Confederation) has drafted a policy plan entitled *Sporting Policy against Sexual Harassment, 1996-1999*. This plan concentrates on ways of preventing and combating sexual harassment in sports. The Minister of Health, Welfare and Sport supports the policy plan.

In May 1997, the national sporting associations affiliated to the NOC\*NSF drew up a code of conduct for professional and voluntary workers in the sports industry. Since 1 January 1998, special telephone lines have been opened so that people can report incidents of sexual harassment in sports.

##### **II.4.4. Combating sexual harassment in education**

Preventing the misuse of power in schools and colleges is one of the spearheads of government policy. In 1998 the Elimination of Sexual Abuse and Sexual Harassment in Education Act was introduced for the primary and secondary education sector and for adult and vocational education. Under this Act, educational establishments are obliged to report any suspected offences. The Act supplements existing measures to prevent sexual harassment.

##### **II.4.5. Action plan to prevent and combat violence against women**

On 10 December 1997 - Human Rights Day - the Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy organised a Round Table Conference with the police, criminal justice authorities, health and welfare organisations, non-governmental organisations and local government. The conference presented recommendations to the Co-ordinating Minister for Emancipation policy and the Minister of Justice for an interministerial action plan to prevent and combat violence against women. These

recommendations were developed by an official interdepartmental working group<sup>8</sup> into a draft action plan. This was later put before an international meeting of experts in The Hague during the 50th anniversary celebration of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in February 1998. The Dutch government delegation then submitted the recommendations from the experts' meeting to the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the UN Commission on Human Rights (March/April 1998). International discussions in the CSW concerning violence against women have led to a call on governments to put together a co-ordinated national multidisciplinary action plan on violence against women. During 1999, the Ministry of Justice will be further developing this plan into an interministerial action plan to prevent and combat domestic violence as part of the European year to eliminate domestic violence against women.

#### **II.4.6. Measures to combat genital mutilation**

In the Netherlands, female circumcision is seen as a violation of the right to physical integrity and is therefore against the law. Various policy measures have been taken to provide information and support to women living in the Netherlands who are from countries where female circumcision is a traditional practice. Dutch embassies are supporting a number of projects in the context of development co-operation policy to inform, raise awareness of and eradicate female circumcision in countries receiving aid. Structural assistance is also being given to the NGO programme run by the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices Affecting the Health of Women and Children.

<b>good practice: <i>Proceeds from book sale</i></b>
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As part of the celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs published a book entitled <i>Reflections on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. A Fiftieth Anniversary Anthology</i> , containing contributions from international human rights experts and activists. Proceeds from the sale of the book will benefit the UN Voluntary Fund for Victims of Torture and the UNFPA Trust Fund for the Elimination of Female Genital Mutilation.
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#### **II.4.7. Preventing and combating trafficking in women**

Trafficking in women, a growing form of international organised crime, has been given increased national and international attention in recent years. Since the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, efforts to combat trafficking in women have been speeded up. The European Union Member States have taken various initiatives in this area. To eliminate trafficking in women, measures are now needed with regard to prevention and early warning, investigation and prosecution, and victim support. This requires a joint approach at both national and international level. These areas together constitute the framework that will give practical form to efforts to prevent and combat trafficking in women.

During its presidency of the European Union in 1997, the Netherlands further elaborated this approach at a conference of EU ministers in The Hague. The Dutch government thus provided a concrete follow-up to the implementation of the *Platform for Action* of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing with regard to the prevention and combating of trafficking in women and the recommendations of an EU conference in Vienna in June 1996.

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<sup>8</sup>The interdepartmental working group is co-ordinated by the Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy and brings together representatives from the Ministries of Social Affairs and Employment, Justice, the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Foreign Affairs, Education, Culture and Science and Health, Welfare and Sport.

good practice: ***The Hague Declaration***

During the Netherlands' EU Presidency, the Co-ordinating Minister for Emancipation policy and the Minister of Justice organised a conference of EU ministers to discuss trafficking in women (April 1997) which resulted in the Hague EU Ministerial Declaration on European Guidelines for Effective Measures to Prevent and Combat Trafficking in Women for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation (otherwise known as the Hague Declaration). This was a practical follow-up to the European Commission's Communication on trafficking in women and the initiative of Belgium and Ireland to conclude binding agreements in the field of justice and home affairs to combat trafficking in human beings and the sexual exploitation of children. It led to a unique form of co-operation between the EU policy areas of equal opportunities, justice and home affairs in the context of mainstreaming emancipation policy, and was continued during subsequent EU presidencies.

The point of departure for the ministerial conference in The Hague was that the only effective way of preventing and combating trafficking in women was through a multidisciplinary and co-ordinated approach bringing together all the relevant players, such as NGOs, organisations for victim support, the criminal justice authorities, the police, embassies and the aliens department. To this end, the ministers responsible for emancipation and the Ministers of Justice of the EU Member States unanimously signed the Hague Declaration. The Declaration contains a specific programme of action which must be worked out in more detail both by the EU institutions and by individual Member States.

The Hague Declaration provides a just cause for supplementary measures focusing on the victims of trafficking, not just in the Netherlands but throughout the EU and at international level. One of these measures - the appointment of a National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Women - will be implemented in the Netherlands in autumn 1999. The Co-ordinating State Secretary for Emancipation policy and the Minister of Justice shall notify parliament of their intention to jointly appoint a National Rapporteur in 1999 together with four other ministers (the Ministers of the Interior, Foreign Affairs, Development Co-operation and Health, Welfare and Sport). The Hague Declaration will be monitored through a periodic overview, which will take into account the work plan being developed by the Ministry of Justice for the proposed abolition of the ban on brothels. At the end of 1999, the follow-up policy to the Hague Declaration will be monitored alongside the compulsory evaluation specified by the EU's joint action programme to combat trafficking in human beings and sexual exploitation of children.

#### **II.4.8. Abolition of the ban on brothels**

In 1997, the Dutch government presented a Bill to parliament proposing an amendment of the Criminal Code to incorporate stricter penalties for forms of organised prostitution involving violence, the misuse of power, deception and the exploitation of minors. A proposal was also made to lift the ban on brothels.

The abolition of the ban on brothels is seen as one of the weapons in the fight against trafficking in women. The aim is that by decriminalising prostitution, setting up a licensing system for brothel operators and improving working conditions for prostitutes, the industry will be less susceptible to crime. An important additional advantage is that the licensing system will make the industry more transparent and easier for the police to monitor.

If a brothel owner employs women who do not have valid residence permits, this will affect the license one needs to operate a brothel, and may in some cases lead to closure of the premises. Because the introduction of stringent regulations will make it unattractive and largely impossible to employ illegal immigrants as prostitutes, traffickers in women will lose a key market in the Netherlands.

The Bill is likely to take effect on 1 January 2000 and will open the way for municipalities to conduct an effective and integrated policy on prostitution. Municipal policy will be organised along three lines. Firstly, the municipalities will operate a licensing policy to control the number and type of brothels. Secondly, they will introduce regulations governing the construction and design of brothels, for example as regards hygiene, prevention of sexually transmitted diseases and fire safety. Finally, regulations will be introduced to ensure that the way brothels are operated does not adversely affect the position and status of prostitutes. This will include protecting their mental and physical well-being

and prohibiting the employment of minors or illegal immigrants.

To prepare for the new situation, intensive discussions were held between the municipalities, the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, representatives of the Ministries of Social Affairs and Employment and of Justice and the National Consultation Group on Prostitution. An Abolition of the Ban on Brothels Supplementary Policy Group has also been established under the auspices of the Ministry of Justice. This group brings together the Association of Netherlands Municipalities, the public prosecution service, the police, the Amsterdam and Hague city councils, officials from the Ministries of Social Affairs and Employment, the Interior and Kingdom Relations and Health, Welfare and Sport and the A. de Graaf Foundation. The group has drafted an enforcement plan co-ordinating supervision and intervention by the local authorities and the police. The various parts of the police force, including the vice squad, aliens department, Criminal Information Service, units investigating serious and other crimes and the Financial Investigations Units will be responsible for all supervision. Due to the large number of units involved, it is important for supervision to be properly co-ordinated. This will probably take the form of checks by the vice squad, involving regular, targeted visits to premises where prostitution is taking place or could be taking place. The aim is to gain an accurate overview of the brothel industry and to obtain early indications about where prostitution is thought to be taking place.

#### **II.4.9. Women in armed conflict**

The initiatives, which have been taken to support women in armed conflict situations, fall into two categories. The first covers the provision of aid to the victims of war in the broadest possible sense; the second involves promoting the active participation of women in the peace process and during the period of post-war reconstruction, based on the needs of the women themselves. Various projects have been launched to examine the role of women in the peace process as part of the government's women in development policy. The main aim of these projects is to lay the foundations for peace and to foster peace negotiations.

good practice: <b><i>Conflict mediation and conflict prevention</i></b>
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<p>The development action programme 'Engendering the Peace Process' in the Middle East focuses on creating a foundation for peace. At the centre were the integration of gender, the formulation of alternatives for sustained peace and the activation of peace negotiations. Under the guidance of professional female negotiators and under the responsibility of two national groups, simultaneous hearings were held in both the Israeli and the Palestinians communities.</p>
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It is recognised by both parties that improvement of political participation by women must be based on a strengthening of their status within their own communities, though without opting for direct co-operation as yet. During a consultative forum in Jerusalem organised by the Dutch government and a delegation of senior international female politicians in September 1997, agreement was reached on the implementation of a joint action programme in the framework of Engendering the Peace Process. One of the activities designed to further broaden the foundation for peace is the establishment of committees for peace, justice and security. These are local women's committees in Israel and the Palestinian territories, which, through policy monitoring and public education, draw attention to the links between peace, justice, and security as preconditions for reconciliation and lasting peace. These groups also conduct activities to encourage the Israeli and Palestinian governments to appoint more women to negotiating teams and to involve more women in political decision-making, especially with regard to the peace process. Relevant agenda items include a political lobby tour, discussions with government leaders, publicity campaigns and a proposal to organise legal aid.

## II.5 REDISTRIBUTION OF POWER AND INFLUENCE

Equal participation by women is crucial for achieving democracy, social equality and a transparent and multiform administration. Equal participation in decision-making bodies, which are after all a reflection of society as a whole, enhances the legitimacy of government. It also improves the quality of decision-making, since decisions and the decision-making process will then reflect the diversity within society.

Decision-making can be divided into 'politics and public administration' and 'community-based decision-making'. Since 1992, the Dutch government has been pursuing a targeted policy to boost the number of women in politics and public administration.

### II.5.1. Target figures for women in politics and public administration

Since 1990 the UN has regarded 30% as the critical threshold for participation by women in political decision-making. If participation falls below 30%, women cannot exercise genuine influence in decision-making since they will find it difficult to be taken seriously as fully-fledged partners in the decision-making process.

Community-based decision-making is defined as participation in decision-making bodies, civil society organisations and enterprises. In principle, civil society organisations are themselves responsible for ensuring equal participation of women. The government merely stimulates, supports and assists the development of 'good practice'. The best-known government-funded initiatives in this area are Opportunity in Business and Toplink, which are discussed in more detail in chapters IV.2.7 and IV.2.8.

Women are still underrepresented on all decision-making bodies. There is therefore a very real danger that not all aspects or consequences affecting women will be taken into account in the decision-making process. Reasons for the underrepresentation of women in the decision-making process can be found both on the supply and demand sides of membership of such bodies.

On the demand side, the criteria and selection procedures used do not appear to favour female membership. The membership profile is largely male. Vacancies are filled by inviting or proposing candidates from within the organisation or by looking for candidates (usually male) outside it. Since economic interest groups have fewer women members there is less chance of a woman being invited to fill such a vacancy.

One major supply-side obstacle to the equal participation of women appears to be the limited number of female members of these organisations. This is due in turn to the limited number of women with managing director status or owning their own businesses. Women are seriously underrepresented in certain sectors, professions and jobs. It is clear from this that the demand and supply-side arguments are both reciprocal and circular.

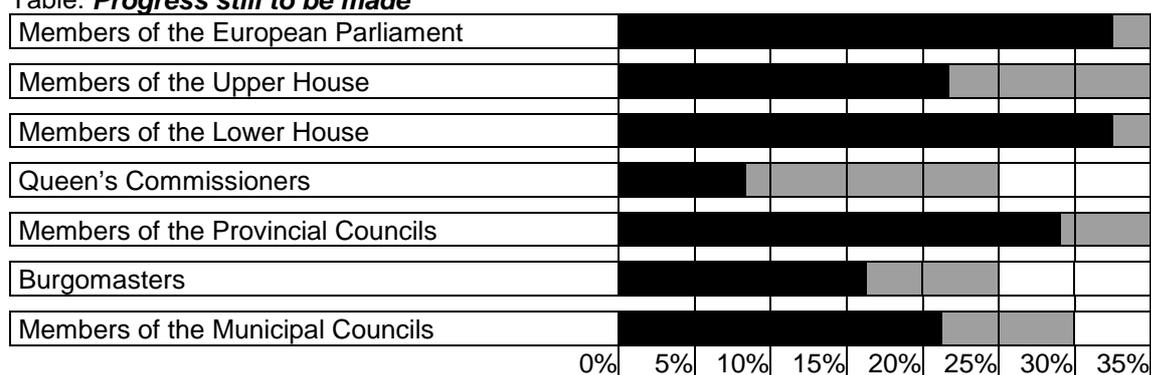
The government has formulated a number of target figures to increase female representation on decision-making bodies by the end of the year 2002. These figures are based on the established ratio of men and women currently in politics and public administration.

The formulation of these target figures and the fact that they clearly imply the application of a preferential policy has created effective conditions for working towards an equal distribution or representation of male and female administrators.

The target figures for 2002 are:

- Lower House of Parliament: over 35% following the next elections;
- European Parliament, Upper House of Parliament and Provincial Councils: 35% women following the next elections and 5% more following each subsequent election until the numbers even out;
- Municipal councils: 30% following the next elections, followed by 5% more after each subsequent election until the numbers even out;
- Burgomasters: 25%; Queen's Commissioners: 25%; Water Board administrators: 15% by the end of 2002;
- Advisory Bodies Framework Act: equal participation.

Table: **Progress still to be made**



Situation at the end of 1997
  Progress still to be made before reaching the target figure

Source: Women in Politics and Public Administration, *Progress Report 1998*, page 3

As the table shows, there is still some way to go before equal representation of women and men in government is achieved, although good progress has certainly been made.

good practice: **Review of the advisory system**

The Advisory Bodies Framework Act took effect on 1 January 1997. It imposes a legal requirement to work towards equal participation by women in government advisory bodies. This is an important step in increasing the representation of women on such bodies and has led to a substantial rise in the number of women on newly created advisory bodies

### II.5.2. TECENA

In addition to the Advisory Bodies Framework Act, the Temporary Expert Committee on Emancipation in the New Advisory System (TECENA) was appointed on 1 January 1998 for a maximum period of three years (see chapter IV.1.3.).

### II.5.3. Local decision-making culture

In 1999, the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations launched a pilot project to increase diversity in local administration. Various municipalities are taking part in this project under the leadership of their burgomasters. The purpose of the project is to create a more accessible political culture at local level. Municipal councils will be conducting activities designed to make local political culture more attractive to newcomers to politics and to the wider public.

The current proportion of women in municipal councils is 22%, a percentage that has remained unchanged for the past three elections. The number of ethnic minority councillors has risen, yet remains low. Research has shown that female councillors either leave office during their first term or fail to put themselves forward for re-election. The same applies to councillors from ethnic minorities. This 'revolving-door effect' is a major reason why the proportion of women and people from ethnic minorities serving on local councils is not growing. Promoting increased diversity in politics therefore does not just depend on encouraging an inflow of new candidates, for example during selection procedures and local elections, but also on retaining (often new) female and ethnic minority councillors.

The municipalities taking part in the project will concentrate on, among other things, communication and co-operation, supporting new councillors and helping them to settle in, promoting diversity in style and approach - including as regards external profiling - and improving the way municipal councils operate.

## II.6 MEDIA AND IMAGE-MAKING

The distinctions made between men and women are often unintentional and tend to be based on a specific, deeply rooted historical image. Both men and women inherit images of a variety of topics, mostly incorporating a value judgement about those topics. One such image concerns what it is to be 'male' and 'female'. This generally takes men as its yardstick, thereby investing them with a higher status than women. This traditional norm is detrimental to role-sharing, freedom of choice and the social standing attributed to men and women.

The creation of gender-based images has been a specific focus of concern of emancipation policy since 1985. The government is taking steps to raise public awareness of processes which perpetuates existing sexual stereotypes. This awareness can then be used to influence those who generate and disseminate such images.

The government is trying in various ways to bring important findings about how images evolve to the notice of a wider public. To assist this process, it has published an accessible brochure for non-specialist readers about the problem of image making, illustrated by a large number of practical examples. This brochure has been widely disseminated.

good practice: <b><i>Guide to Effective Image Making</i></b>
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A <i>Guide to Effective Image Making</i> was published at the beginning of 1999 with an equal opportunities grant from the government. The guide contains advice for professional 'image-makers' on how to identify and break with stereotypical gender images. Most of these image-makers are government information officers, professionals in the advertising and media industry and authors of official and academic publications. The guide applies existing insights on the development of male and female images to the work of these image-makers using texts and illustrations
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### II.6.1. Image making Office m/f

The Ministries of Education, Culture and Science and of Social Affairs and Employment have been subsidising a five-year pilot project (due to end this year) on the development of gender-based images in the media. The purpose of the project, which is run by the national broadcasting corporation, is to find practical ways to generate a broader and more varied image of women and men and of what it means to be female or male in programmes broadcast by the corporation.

This project has had a significant impact, both within Dutch broadcasting and in other countries. It has led to a collaborative partnership with Scandinavian broadcasters, who are now conducting a similar experiment. A follow-on project has been launched in the Netherlands to make awareness of gender-based image-making a permanent feature of public broadcasting.

good practice: <b><i>AXIS Office for the Arts (m/f)</i></b>
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AXIS is a national organisation for women and culture, set up in 1996. The main aim of the AXIS Office for the Arts (m/f) is to change people's perceptions of men and women, of 'masculinity' and 'femininity'. It also seeks to improve the professional status of women artists. The Office provides public information, answers queries from the public and supports professionals.
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### II.6.2. Business is Business

The book *Business is Business*, which was published in 1999 at the instigation of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, stresses the need for a 'gender critical' approach to language and thinking in policy. The book is based on various studies of image making, and seeks to make these studies available to a wider audience.

Policy documents often contain hidden examples of gender stereotyping and of the perceived role and status of men and women. This practice unintentionally and inadvertently perpetuates the imbalance of power between the sexes. Constant alertness to this hidden 'gender loading' in language and attitudes is needed. This will help prevent a so-called 'gender neutral' policy from having undesirable knock-on effects on the emancipation process.

## **II.7 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

One of the ways in which the Dutch government is trying to improve the environment is through rural development. Women are a key part of this process. Rural women are developing a variety of initiatives for new economic activities in rural areas. Roughly 13% of women in the farming sector have started their own businesses in recent years. Around 32% of women below the age of 40 who are partners of farmers or agricultural workers go out to work. Rural women play a highly active role in improving the quality of life in rural areas. They often have a different, more innovative approach to rural development. The initiatives they launch serve to strengthen the rural economic base and reconcile what appear to be contradictory activities within these areas.

### **II.7.1. Decision-making**

In recent years, the government has also sought to increase the proportion of women on the advisory bodies and committees consulted by the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Fisheries, and on the executive committees of civil society organisations, in the interests of promoting diversity within these organisations. Six of the 15 members of the Council for Rural Areas, the national advisory council to the government established in 1997, are women. However, it remains necessary to be alert to the need to appoint more women to new committees and consultative bodies.

The government is also providing financial support to projects run by civil society organisations to train and coach women for posts on executive committees. This has led to an increase in the percentage of women on the executive board of the Dutch Federation of Agricultural and Horticultural Organisations (LTO-Nederland) from 3% in 1988 to an average of 10% in 1995, despite the fact that the number of female members in the LTO has remained unchanged at 7%.

The role of rural women in the ongoing development of rural areas is crucial, especially in farming, where women make a key contribution to the creation of a sustainable, strong and competitive agricultural sector. Women appear to have a greater awareness of social developments, such as increased public concern for environmentally and animal-friendly production methods, and are ready to communicate with consumers on these issues. The image of rural women is also being promoted in the political arena. This is having a positive effect on attitudes to these women, for example, when they approach banks for a loan. Policy-makers and decision-makers have also recently begun to become more aware of the status of rural women.

### **II.7.2. Invalidity Insurance (Self-Employed Persons) Act**

The Invalidity Insurance (Self-Employed Persons) Act took effect on 1 January 1998. The Act regulates pregnancy and maternity leave for self-employed persons (including those in the agricultural industry) and for partners who are also co-workers. Both partners are entitled to up to 16 weeks' paid leave to cover pregnancy and maternity, based on their actual or notional income over the past five years, up to the level of the minimum wage. This makes it financially possible for female agricultural workers to hire in a replacement for the duration of their pregnancy and maternity leave.

### **III EMANCIPATION POLICY: A WIDE DIVERSITY OF INSTRUMENTS**

A wide range of instruments is needed to implement the government's two-tracked strategy, mainstreaming and targeted emancipation policy.

#### **III.1 INSTRUMENTS BASED ON LEGAL OBLIGATIONS**

##### **III.1.1. Equal Treatment Act (AWGB)**

The Equal Treatment Act prohibits direct and indirect discrimination on the basis of religion, personal convictions, political persuasion, race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation and marital status. The ban on discrimination does not apply to indirect discrimination, which can be objectively justified. Direct discrimination is prohibited unless it is specifically exempted by the Act. For example, the Act states that the ban on sexual discrimination does not apply in cases involving the protection of women during pregnancy and maternity. The Equal Treatment Act allows a group action to be brought in the event of discrimination. The Act is currently under review.

##### **III.1.2. Equal Opportunities Act (WGB)**

Article 646 section 7.10 of the Civil Code prohibits employers from discriminating against women as regards employment conditions, including pay. The Equal Opportunities Act sets out what is meant in practice by the ban on pay differentials. The Act currently states that pay comparisons can only be made between individuals working for the same enterprise. The term 'enterprise' is narrowly interpreted as meaning 'branch'. It is therefore not possible to compare the pay of staff working for the same employer at different branches. The government sees this as unjust and will be revising the Act to allow comparisons to be made between staff working for the same employer.

##### **III.1.3. Equal Treatment Commission**

Following the introduction of the Equal Treatment Act (AWGB), a new Equal Treatment Commission succeeded the Equal Treatment (Working Hours) Commission. The Equal Treatment Commission covers the wider area of activity of the Equal Treatment Act and consequently has more extensive powers, extra staff and a larger budget. The Commission can investigate suspected acts of discrimination either in response to written requests or on its own initiative. Requests can be submitted by anyone who believes they are the victim of discrimination. Works councils, interest groups, courts of law and employers, can also call in the Commission. It will investigate whether the Equal Treatment Act has been contravened and submit its findings accordingly. These conclusions are non-binding. In practice, however, they are generally accepted.

The Commission has also been given the authority to add recommendations to its findings for the benefit of the organisation which committed the offence, an option it regularly exercises. Its purpose in doing so is to show the employer that it is possible to comply with the law without compromising its interests. The Commission also sometimes acts as a mediator. Furthermore, it has the authority to apply to a court of law for a binding ruling on the incompatibility of a specific act of discrimination with equal rights legislation. The Commission may do this when its own conclusions have been disregarded, in which case it can ask to have the act in question declared unlawful, have it prohibited or have it overruled by a court order.

The number of requests asking the Commission to investigate alleged acts of discrimination is rising. In 1994 there were 29 such requests; in 1995 this number rose to 246, in 1996 there were 421, in 1997 there were 386 and in 1998 there were 346. As a result, the number of opinions issued by the Equal Treatment Commission has also risen. In 1995 the Commission issued 70 opinions. In 1996 this number had risen to 119; in 1997 there were 149 opinions and in 1998 there were 167. The vast majority of these opinions concerned sexual discrimination, followed by racial discrimination (almost a quarter of all opinions issued by the Commission during 1997). The rise in the number of opinions concerning discrimination based on marital status (almost 10% of all cases) since 1996 is striking. In

1997 this percentage was 6.6 and by 1998 it had risen to 10.

#### **III.1.4. Regulations governing equal treatment**

Regulations provide the foundation for the anchoring of emancipation policy in law. They can be applied to any area and range from numerical targets to measures to combat violence against women. The government is in all cases responsible for investigating, banning and preventing direct and indirect discrimination through legislation, jurisprudence and public administration. Regulations governing the equal treatment of men and women are found in a wide range of areas and are laid down in various laws.

#### **III.1.5. Submission of reports to CEDAW**

Every four years, the signatories to the UN Women's Convention must submit a report to the Committee for the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). This report must outline all the measures arising from the treaty obligations which a country has taken and must also include a progress update.

The Netherlands submitted its second report to CEDAW in November 1998. The report was divided into three policy levels, based on the national report to parliament and the articles of the UN Convention:

Level 1: measures designed to ensure that women and men are fully equal before the law and in public life;

Level 2: measures designed to ensure that formal equality under the law is respected. These measures are designed to improve the status of women;

Level 3: measures to encourage a change in attitudes concerning the role of women and men and of what it means to be 'masculine' and 'feminine'.

This second report is more analytical and result-orientated, in response to the conclusions drawn by CEDAW following the first report. This is reflected especially in the new emphases in socio-economic policy and in policy to prevent and combat violence against women, including trafficking in women.

<b>good practice: <i>National report on the implementation of the UN Women's Convention</i></b>
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<p>The Dutch parliament has added a new amendment ((the Kalsbeek amendment) to the Act implementing the UN Convention. This amendment states that prior to its four-yearly report to CEDAW, the government must compile a national report on the implementation of the Convention in the Netherlands and send it to parliament. Parliament had expressed a desire for a national report of this kind to enable it to add its input to the report to CEDAW. The national report will include a progress update on the equal treatment of women in all conceivable areas.</p>
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<p>The first national report was compiled by an independent commission (the Groenman Commission) and sent to parliament in March 1997. In depth studies have been carried out on several areas of the Convention. These are:</p>
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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The Convention in the Dutch legal order;</li><li>2. The meaning of article 12 of the Convention for the Netherlands: health as a right;</li><li>3. The meaning of the Convention for the legal status of pregnant women and young mothers.</li></ol> |
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## **III.2. INSTRUMENTS DESIGNED TO BROADEN SUPPORT**

### **III.2.1. Communications policy**

Emancipation policy not only relies on the spreading of information about that policy but also - and increasingly - on modern forms of communication such as the Internet. Information and communication technology (ICT) is now able to influence people both in public as in private domain. However, due to the speed with which information is gathered and dispersed, there is a risk of information overload. Given the sheer volume of information available, it is difficult, though not impossible, to ensure that the emancipation message is seen and heard. Besides traditional instruments such as brochures and publications, emancipation policy now has access to modern ICT instruments.

### **III.2.2. New alliances**

One important element in what is referred to as the Dutch 'consensus model' (poldermodel) is the creation of alliances, networks and a consultative structure. New options are being explored to ensure that it can continue to implement, improve and publicise emancipation policy. Creating new alliances with organisations other than NGOs is a crucial part of this strategy. This policy targets alliances that are not primarily associated with emancipation policy, such as cultural, business and media organisations.

New alliances are also being forged with artists. For example, by selecting a female artist for a project or by using music and paintings or images specially composed or created by women, the media can be used to pursue two directions simultaneously: that of emancipation policy and that of the woman artist.

The Daily Routine Committee, for example, included trendsetters from various groups to create the broadest possible foundation for emancipation policy. The same applies to Opportunity in Business, where an alliance was created with enterprises, some of them multinationals.

### **III.2.3. Joke Smit Prize**

The Joke Smit Prize, a government award for achievement in emancipation, was established in 1985. It is named after Joke Smit, a pioneer of the contemporary Dutch women's movement, who died in 1981. By creating this prize, the government has underlined the importance of emancipation policy as a key component within overall government policy and has also sought to emphasise the significance of efforts to promote emancipation policy.

In 1996 the prize was awarded to Mama Cash, a foundation dedicated to improving the status of women. In 1998 it was awarded to the feminist magazine *Opzij*.

### **III.3 INSTRUMENTS GEARED TOWARDS THE SUPPORT, RESEARCH, MONITORING AND DETECTION OF HIDDEN DISCRIMINATION**

#### **III.3.1. Subsidy policy**

The most important instrument that can be used to implement the emancipation support structure is subsidy. A large number of national organisations now contribute to the emancipation process through projects and/or programmes. Most of these organisations are involved in building expertise or supplying information and drawing attention to policy-related issues. They are largely government-funded. Few, as yet, apply to the EU for funding.

##### **III.3.1.1. Emancipation Subsidy Scheme**

The new 1998 Emancipation Subsidy Scheme took effect on 1 January 1998. The review of the existing scheme was directly prompted by the introduction of the new General Administrative Law Act and the fact that the existing subsidy scheme no longer tied in with the general subsidy schemes administered by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. The review was also carried out in response to social developments. Like its predecessor, the new subsidy scheme can award grants to small-scale and innovative initiatives. It provides a foundation for the launch of supplementary initiatives which continue to be necessary despite the fact that in various areas, the emancipation process is gradually being incorporated into the regular policy process. It is therefore still possible to use the scheme to subsidise initiatives which make a positive contribution to the emancipation process. A budget of NLG 11.8 million has been set aside to implement the subsidy scheme during 1999 (see also chapter V, Financial framework).

The 1998 Emancipation Subsidy Scheme covers three types of activities which are eligible for subsidy:

- a. Activities which tie in with the current themes addressed by emancipation policy (these are redefined each year in the budget of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment). In 1998 these themes were human rights of women and 100 years of women's work; the themes for 1999 are Five Years after Beijing, caring in the 21st century and the younger generation;
- b. Activities aimed at removing structural and cultural obstacles and direct and indirect discrimination between groups according to gender, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation and personal convictions, in order to uphold diversity as a source of quality within society, or activities which make a substantial contribution to the capacity of these groups to participate fully and simultaneously in different areas of life (the personal sphere, the world of work and income and the politico-social sphere);
- c. Activities (often long-term) aimed at broadening support for the emancipation process or which contribute to the build-up of expertise.

Subsidies are targeted primarily at activities or initiatives which straddle more than one ministry or sector, are likely to have a national impact, are innovative and/or are designed to broaden the basis of social support for emancipation policy.

The type c organisations which are eligible for subsidy are:

1. The International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement (IIAV)  
*Aim:* to develop and update a specialist library, documentation centre and archive on women's emancipation, feminism and women's culture.
2. Toplink  
*Aim:* to make a structural contribution to an increase in the number of women in administration, on committees and on councils through the active recruitment of qualified women to external government advisory bodies, other existing and proposed government-funded advisory bodies, independent advisory bodies and executive councils of (mainly nationally operating) NGOs. Toplink is co-financed by the Ministries of the Interior and of Health, Welfare and Sport.
3. Women's Alliance  
*Aim:* to inform and guide the political and social debate on economic self-sufficiency (and related areas such as social security, pensions and tax) and the redistribution of paid and unpaid work.
4. E-Quality

*Aim:* to promote balanced gender and ethnic relations by influencing social interaction and policy through its role as an independent emancipation and gender expertise centre for Dutch multicultural society and international fora.

5. Opportunity in Business

*Aim:* to promote equal labour participation by women at all levels in organisations providing employment, to encourage companies to make better use of women's capacities, to develop an up-to-date network for companies and to boost recognition of the economic potential of women. The Ministry of Economic Affairs co-finances this initiative, to which participating companies also contribute.

### **III.3.2. The Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy research programme**

The Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy research programme is redefined each year. Its purpose is to contribute to the ongoing encouragement, development and implementation of the government's emancipation policy.

The research programme is used to provide focus for new policy themes and to develop instruments to implement the government's two-tracked policy. To this end, the programme is divided into three categories.

#### **III.3.2.1. Innovative research**

Innovative research can be used to chart new developments and stimulate associated policy developments. This type of research can be experimental in nature due to the fact that it is forward-looking.

#### **III.3.2.2. Promoting the integration aspects of mainstreaming**

Research can help integrate emancipation goals into regular policy. One way of doing so is through instruments such as the Gender Impact Assessment, which is discussed below. Research can also be used to help clarify the progress made by emancipation policy in society.

#### **III.3.2.3. Follow-on studies**

The research programme also includes studies which can assist the implementation of political pledges, international obligations, current themes and follow-on research.

### **III.3.3. Monitoring**

Systematic monitoring is a useful way of making the emancipation process more transparent and open to evaluation. Numerical data and analyses can be used as source material for policy. Publishing this information not only clarifies the process for policy-makers but also makes it more accessible to the general public. This will widen support for emancipation policy and improve the quality of the process.

<b>good practice: <i>Emancipation Yearbook</i></b>
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The Yearbook is a collaborative effort between the Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy and Statistics Netherlands (CBS). It brings together statistical data and analyses and includes a forecast as well as a retrospective analysis. Two yearbooks have appeared so far. The first Emancipation Yearbook was published in 1997 on the theme of paid work and unpaid care. The second appeared in 1998 on the theme 'a time and a place for work and care'. The third yearbook, to be published in 1999, will also be about paid work unpaid care: who cares in the 21st century?
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### **III.3.4. Gender Impact Assessment**

Since 1995, Gender Impact Assessment has been applied to policy proposals. This gives policy-makers an accurate idea of the possible effects of proposed policy on emancipation processes before that policy is adopted and implemented. An evaluation of this kind reveals the potential and likely effects of such policy. It forces policy-makers to carefully consider whether their plans will have unintentional and inadvertent consequences for the status of women and men. It also provides an analytical framework for systematically charting the effects of policy on the status of women and men.

good practice: ***Gender Impact Assessment***

Gender Impact Assessment is an ex-ante evaluation that was developed in the Netherlands. It is an assessment of policy proposals focusing not on the aims of policy but on the degree to which policy can be expected to have either a positive or negative impact on the lives of women and men and on the structural balance of power.

A theoretical framework has been devised for the Gender Impact Assessment based on the theoretical parameters of the analysis. For example, it identifies structural inequalities between the sexes and indicates how they operate and how they should be evaluated.

The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has applied Gender Impact Assessment to key policy proposals. The purpose of these assessments is to prevent these proposals from unintentionally and inadvertently perpetuating gender inequalities or stereotypical role patterns. The same method has been applied to the advisory report on junior general secondary and pre-vocational education and beyond, to the Higher Education and Research Plan (HOOP), to the Information and Communications Technology Policy Document and to the funding system for adult and vocational education. It will also be applied to the new plans on student finance and an integrated personnel policy. Despite early teething troubles, Gender Impact Assessment has given policy-makers a better idea of the potential gender-specific consequences of what may initially appear to be gender-neutral policies.

Gender Impact Assessment was evaluated at the end of 1998. This evaluation examined the practical added value of the existing assessment method as an instrument for mainstreaming and the relevance it has had for the development of policy. The assessment incorporated the views of ministry officials concerning the usefulness of impact assessment and the resulting report. The evaluation concluded that Gender Impact Assessment was a valuable instrument for identifying hidden gender discrimination. However, it is important for policy-makers to know when impact assessment is relevant and what parameters need to be applied.

### **III.3.6. Project-based approach**

In order to shape her initiating, innovating and co-ordinating role, the Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy works on a project oriented base. This creates the possibility, where necessary, to take one-off initiatives, which in the long run could lead to changes in the mainstream emancipation policy.

Such initiatives include the Daily Routine Incentive Scheme launched by the Commission on Future Scenarios for the Redistribution of Unpaid Work (1994-1995) and the Daily Routine Committee (1996-1998); the Hague Declaration adopted during the Netherlands' EU Presidency (1997) and the forthcoming appointment of a National Rapporteur on Trafficking in Women (1999), and the Round Table Conference and international expertmeeting on combating violence against women (1997-1998), which lead tot the initiative to develop an interdepartmental plan of action on preventing and combating domestic violence (1999).

## **IV NATIONAL MACHINERY AND EMANCIPATION SUPPORT STRUCTURE**

In the Netherlands, political responsibility for emancipation policy resides either with a Co-ordinating Minister or a Co-ordinating State Secretary for emancipation policy, who is also responsible for regulating the distribution of paid work and unpaid care. Under the present administration a state secretary performs this role. In the interests of mainstreaming, the other ministers and state secretaries are also expressly responsible for emancipation policy in their own areas of competence. The interpretation and practical implementation of emancipation policy cannot therefore be separated from the specific policies of the relevant ministries.

### **IV.1. NATIONAL MACHINERY**

The political responsibility of the state secretary covers the emancipation aspects of government policy as a whole. The Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy, which has been part of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment since 1981, is the key component in the national machinery of central government. This unit is responsible for the development of a cohesive emancipation policy and has also been given the task of initiating, reviewing and co-ordinating policy.

Interdepartmental co-ordination is managed by the Interdepartmental Co-ordination Committee for Emancipation Policy, which is chaired by the director of the Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy and brings together representatives from all the ministries. Almost every ministry has an internal co-ordinating body, which advises its own minister on emancipation issues relating to that ministry's area of competence. This is frequently an emancipation committee. The authority and practical influence of these bodies differs from ministry to ministry.

The work of the former Parliamentary Permanent Committee on Emancipation Policy has now been transferred to the Permanent Committee for Social Affairs and Employment. As a result, parliament can now assess the emancipation goals of socio-economic policy more fully.

Co-ordination between central government and international bodies is becoming increasingly important. The European Union plays a key role in this. Major international conventions such as the UN Women's Convention and international agreements such as the *Beijing Platform for Action* drafted during the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women are growing in significance.

The national machinery helps the government to develop policy and policy-related measures. This has widened the foundation for emancipation policy and has increased the scope for forging alliances and implementing successful initiatives. An emancipation support structure, however, remains necessary to stimulate the process of change towards an emancipated society. The shift in emancipation policy away from analysis and towards implementation has resulted in a deliberate broadening of the number of actors involved. The national machinery is also more geared towards widening the acceptance of emancipation beyond the scope of emancipation specialists. With this in mind, the government has been reviewing the emancipation support structure in 1995.

The government has drafted a series of conditions based on its review of aspects of the national machinery, the development of a new emancipation support policy and measures to integrate recommendations on emancipation policy into the government's regular advisory tasks. These conditions continue the strategy adopted by the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women. The various players involved can apply for subsidies to fund initiatives based on these conditions and move forward the emancipation process, and an exchange can take place between the women's movement and the implementation of government policy.

In order to be able to contribute to these developments and to operate as effectively as possible, the national machinery and the emancipation support structure must reflect and review the progress of emancipation policy so far. In recent years, the expansion of emancipation policy into other areas of society has increased the number of players involved in the emancipation process. In 1997 the emancipation support structure was reviewed to accommodate the latest national and international developments.

#### **IV.1.2. Disbanding of the Emancipation Council**

The Emancipation Council was disbanded on 1 May 1997 after having played a key role in emancipation policy over the past 16 years. The role of the Emancipation Council had been to issue recommendations to the relevant ministers, either at their request or on its own initiative, concerning the government's emancipation policy in general and the co-ordination of emancipation provisions and measures in particular.

The government decided to dissolve the Emancipation Council as part of its fundamental reorganisation of the advisory councils. This was done as part of the 'mainstreaming' exercise to integrate emancipation aspects into regular policy.

The disbanding of the Emancipation Council effected a major change in the emancipation support structure. The Council has played an important role in the evolution of the emancipation process in general and in the direction and guidance of policy in particular. It therefore functioned both in an advisory and a think tank capacity.

The Emancipation Council advised the government on ways of continuing to uphold emancipation issues after it had been disbanded. On the basis of this advice, the government opted for three main lines of policy to integrate emancipation policy into the new advisory structure:

- a) Provision of advice on emancipation policy as part of the regular work of all advisory bodies;
- b) The government will undertake to appoint sufficient women to external advisory bodies;
- c) The integration of emancipation policy into the new advisory structure will be given supervision and support.

#### **IV.1.3. Equal Treatment Commission**

The Equal Treatment Commission investigates and assesses whether there are contravening acts to the provisions of the Equal Treatment Act (see chapter III.1.2.).

#### **IV.1.4. TECENA**

On 1 January 1998, one year after the entry into force of the Advisory Bodies Framework Act, the Temporary Expert Committee (TECENA) was appointed for a maximum period of three years in order to monitor the incorporation of the gender perspective into the new consultation system. Its task will be to ensure that within the new advisory structure, government advisory bodies devote sufficient attention in their recommendations to the emancipation aspects of the issues under consideration. TECENA's responsibilities are to:

- a) Ensure that emancipation aspects are taken into consideration in all advice requested;
- b) Suggest ways in which the advisory bodies can increase knowledge of emancipation among their members and staff;
- c) Ensure that efforts are made to find suitable female candidates for appointments to advisory bodies.

## IV.2. THE MAIN ACTORS IN THE EMANCIPATION SUPPORT STRUCTURE

The emancipation support structure has been updated since the Beijing conference. The quality and effectiveness of emancipation policy in the Netherlands has always to some extent relied on the existence of an emancipation support structure. Emancipation policy is traditionally rooted in the inspiration and specific input of the wider women's movement and has evolved in close co-operation with these organisations<sup>9</sup>.

Support for initiatives launched by the women's movement has led to the development of centres of expertise on emancipation. The activities of these various centres can be grouped into four categories, which are also used to classify them<sup>10</sup>. These categories are: (co)development of new products, opening up access to information, registering signals from the target group and building a social and political support base for emancipation policy and directly or indirectly influencing policy.

All the centres conduct the last two activities. The centres responsible for developing new products (activity 1) can be subdivided into two categories:

- a. General centres of expertise such as E-Quality, the Clara Wichmann Institute and the national network of provincial and metropolitan women's emancipation centres;
- b. Centres of expertise focusing on a specific theme or sector such as TransAct for gender-specific health care provision and the combating of sexual violence, Opportunity in Business for helping the private sector to recruit more women to its ranks at all levels and Toplink, a database for women in executive roles.

Organisations and institutions whose main task is to provide information and draw attention to relevant developments (activity 2) can also be subdivided into two groups:

- a. Non-specific organisations such as the International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement;
- b. Thematic or sectoral umbrella organisations such as the Women's Alliance, the National Women's Council, rural women's organisations, refugee organisations and the Women's Council of Netherlands Development Agencies.

### IV.2.1. E-Quality

E-Quality was established on 1 January 1998. It was formed following a merger between four emancipation centres of expertise, each of which was previously awarded a separate government grant. These four centres were ARACHNE, the Institute for Women and Labour, the Women's Exchange Programme International and AISA. E-Quality is an institute for gender and ethnicity, which operates both as a national and international centre of expertise. It fulfils an innovative, indicative, informative and advisory role in various spheres of activity. E-Quality maintains close links with the women's movement and advises the government, NGOs and the private sector. The organisation will be allocated a NLG 3.7 million grant over the coming years, eventually rising to NLG 4.6 million, by the Co-ordinating State Secretary Emancipation policy.

### IV.2.2. The International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement

The Netherlands has a special documentation centre on the status of women in the form of the International Information Centre and Archives for the Women's Movement (IIAV). The IIAV consists of an academic library, documentation centre and archive containing information on the status of women and women's studies. In addition to fulfilling a national function, this institution also performs a key international role. The centre has recently launched a project entitled *Mapping the World* in the context of this international role. This is a database of women's information services, which can be accessed all over the world. The aim of *Mapping the World* is to promote the transparency of the service and to improve access to gender-specific information. The user group consists of women, women's organisations, policy-makers and general information services. The IIAV will be allocated a budget of approximately NLG 2.4 million per year over the coming years by the Co-ordinating State Secretary for

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<sup>9</sup>Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, *Het Vrouwenverdrag in Nederland anno 1997*, 1997, page 69.

<sup>10</sup>Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, *Van initiatieven uit de vrouwenbeweging tot expertisecentra emancipatie*, 1995, p 84.

Emancipation policy.

#### **IV.2.3. Foundation against Trafficking in Women**

The Foundation against Trafficking in Women protects the interests of (immigrant) women working as prostitutes or in related industries and who suffer coercion, violence and exploitation. The organisation receives a grant of approximately NLG 500,000 each year from the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

#### **IV.2.4. TransAct**

To provide added impetus to the implementation of policy against sexual violence, the Netherlands Centre for Gender-Specific Health Care and the Eradication of Sexual Violence, TransAct, has been asked to head efforts to push forward policy to combat sexual violence for a four-year period (beginning in 1997), alongside its regular duties. Regional co-operation, promoting permanent attention to sexual violence in schools, quality control and strengthening the role of the client are all spearheads of this leadership role. TransAct receives a total of NLG 2.8 million a year for its regular work and its supplementary spearhead role from the Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport.

#### **IV.2.5. The Women's Alliance**

This umbrella organisation, created in 1993 following a merger between the Women's Economic Self-Sufficiency Platform and the Association for the Redistribution of Paid and Unpaid Work, has a very large number of member organisations, including the women's secretariat of the Federation of Netherlands Trade Unions, rural women's organisations, TIYE International and the National Women's Council. The Women's Alliance receives an annual grant of roughly NLG 500,000 from the Coordinating State Secretary for Emancipation policy.

#### **IV.2.6. The Clara Wichmann Institute**

The Clara Wichmann Institute (CWI) is the central institute for women and law in the Netherlands. It receives an annual grant of approximately NLG 900,000 from the Minister of Justice.

#### **IV.2.7. Opportunity in Business**

The Opportunity in Business initiative was launched in 1996 as part of the emancipation policy of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment and the Ministry of Economic Affairs. The aim of the project is to improve the way in which the capacities of women are utilised on the labour market. A further aim is to achieve a balanced distribution of men and women in jobs at all levels.

The Opportunity in Business steering group consists of representatives from 20 companies. These include KPMG, KLM, Unilever, ABN-AMRO Bank, Akzo-Nobel, plus the Ministries of Social Affairs and Employment and of Economic Affairs, employers' organisations and trade unions.

Opportunity in Business provides customised support to member companies. The aim is for each affiliated company to draft its own plans and goals to achieve diversity, which are linked to its long-term business strategy. This will eventually bring about a cultural change within these companies. Opportunity in Business offers companies specific strategies for bringing about these shifts in corporate culture. Just over a year after its launch, around a hundred companies have now joined the campaign. Opportunity in Business receives a NLG 1 million annual grant.

#### **IV.2.8. Toplink**

Toplink, which was established in 1995, is designed to help recruit more women to the executive boards of NGOs, government advisory bodies and supervisory boards, and mediates in filling vacancies in these bodies. It manages a database of highly qualified women, which it uses to fill vacancies on the executive boards of national civil society organisations, government advisory bodies and company supervisory boards. Toplink receives an annual grant of NLG 400,000.

#### **IV.2.9. Consultative Group on Women from an Ethnic Group Background**

The Consultative Group on Women from Ethnic Group Backgrounds grew out of an informal network launched by the national machinery. It brings together representatives from black, immigrant and refugee women's organisations and institutions and representatives from four relevant ministries. The aim of this periodic consultation group was initially to maintain regular contacts to discuss proposed policy. Following an internal evaluation in 1997, however, the Consultative Group decided to focus more on the targeted influencing of government policy at an early stage to accommodate the wishes and needs of black, immigrant and refugee women in respect of emancipation policy.

### IV.3 FINANCIAL FRAMEWORK FOR INTERDEPARTMENTAL EMANCIPATION POLICY

A breakdown of the budget of the Co-ordinating State Secretary for Emancipation policy is shown below.

	<b>amounts set aside for emancipation policy, including government grants (in NLG)</b>
<b>1995</b>	11.2 million
<b>1996</b>	11.4 million
<b>1997</b>	10.9 million
<b>1998</b>	12.2 million

#### **Central government internal emancipation policy**

The internal emancipation policy of central government is at least as important as its external emancipation policy. In this instance, the government's internal policy is seen as an element within its personnel policy. Internal policy is co-ordinated by the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, which is responsible for the overall personnel policy of central government. This ministry monitors the personnel policies of all the ministries and in so doing gathers information on policy progress. Since 1995, policy on the promotion of women in public administration and the related target figures has been decentralised to the individual ministries.

#### **Staff complement of the Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy**

	<b>staff complement in FTEs</b>
1995	24.16
1996	24.16
1997	25.03
1998	25.55

#### **Interdepartmental Action Plan on Emancipation**

As part of the Interdepartmental Emancipation Action Plan, all the ministries set aside funding to give an extra boost to their own chosen priorities. The Action Plan is discussed in more detail in section V.3.

## V FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Since the Fourth United Nations World Conference on Women, emancipation policy in the Netherlands has moved away from an analysis of policy aims and towards their implementation. The Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy- the government unit responsible for integrating emancipation into regular policy - is now working on ways to integrate emancipation policy into the regular policies of each ministry. Since the First UN World Conference on Women in Mexico, the Dutch government has been pursuing on emancipation policy in three stages: creating a statutory framework aimed at eliminating discrimination against women, correcting the belief that women are inherently disadvantaged compared to men and changing the culture of society towards an acceptance of diversity.

### V.1 1998 Coalition Agreement

On 3 August 1998 the current administration published its coalition agreement. This document emphasises the need to pursue two tracks of policy. The coalition agreement contains the following passage under the section on emancipation policy:

"Emancipation policy has for many years involved a great deal more than simply closing the gap between women and men. It now involves changes in the distribution of tasks, an appreciation of tasks and a review of the social status of men and women in the widest sense. Emancipation policy now covers all areas of policy, and this is reflected throughout this coalition document.

During its present term in office, the government will take further steps to implement the UN Women's Convention based on the report by the Groenman Commission.

Formal equality between men and women in the Netherlands has made great strides; however, material equality still has a long way to go. The rising proportion of women in the labour process is not yet balanced by a sufficient number of men performing paid care. This is creating the risk of a 'care vacuum'. The proposed expansion of child care facilities, and out-of-school care, will provide a solution to care for children. A proper system of statutory leave provisions is needed to encourage individuals to care for elderly parents and sick family members on a voluntary basis. The government will apply the recent recommendations of the Daily Routine Committee, among others, to resolve difficulties in combining paid work and unpaid care.

The aim is to create an even balance between unpaid care, paid work, social participation and leisure time for both men and women. Government policy will concentrate on eradicating stereotypical images of men and women and of ethnicity both within and outside government, and on encouraging positive image making.

Efforts to encourage more women to enter public administration, industry and commerce and rise to senior posts will be intensified in collaboration with Toplink, Opportunity in Business and the social partners (with a view to breaking through the 'glass ceiling').

The new tax system will provide major opportunities for increased economic self-sufficiency among women.

Special attention will be given within policy to increasing acceptance of emancipation policy among young people; to these individuals, gender equality is often self-evident, at least in theory. In practice, however, they are usually confronted sooner or later with institutional or other obstacles.

Specific attention must also be given to the status of girls from ethnic minority backgrounds, who are frequently faced with conflicting patterns of expectation. The role of these girls could be crucial in the creation of social cohesion in a multicultural society. The Co-ordinating State Secretary for Emancipation policy must therefore continue to play a co-ordinating role. This does not absolve the other ministries from individual responsibility for emancipation policy. The role of the various ministries in implementing policy aimed at integrating or mainstreaming emancipation policy will therefore be encouraged. Each ministry will draft an action plan containing at least three specific tasks relating to the implementation and application of policy which will be carried out during the present government's term in office.

#### *Homosexual marriages*

To promote the equal treatment of homosexual and lesbian couples, the government will submit a Bill to parliament before 1 January 1999 aimed at extending civil marriage to individuals of the same sex. The government will also submit a Bill to parliament by 1 January 1999 at the latest to allow single sex

couples to adopt children of Dutch nationality." At the moment the Bill is being drafted.

## **V.2. Multi-Year Policy Document on Emancipation beyond the year 2000**

A multi-year policy document on emancipation policy will be published in the summer of 1999. This document will describe and outline trends in five policy areas over the next 10 years. A study of future trends is needed to accurately chart the opportunities and risks facing emancipation policy. This can then be used to set an initial course for emancipation policy in the 21st century.

The multi-year policy document comes about along a two-tracked approach. The first approach is an intensive process of forward-looking surveys in which studies are conducted in five areas, which are of key importance to emancipation policy in the future. These areas are:

1. Paid work, unpaid care and income;
2. Political and community-based decision-making;
3. Human rights of women;
4. Combining paid work and unpaid care: the organisation of different aspects of everyday life in time and place;
5. The information society and its consequences.

Academic specialists were asked to explore future outlooks for each of these five areas, to include a current situation analysis and a brief review of successful and less successful developments. These specialists will also forecast developments in emancipation policy up to the end of the year 2010, based on past trends and trend reversals. The authors of these outlooks were given scope to include their own interpretations, which had to be backed up wherever possible by research findings and statistics.

The second line of approach is the interactive approach. An initial direction for policy will be indicated using the results of both approaches described above. The resulting policy document will then be sent to the advisory councils for their recommendations, after which it will be opened up to public debate. The multi-year policy document will in the long run not only serve as a building block for emancipation policy in the Netherlands, it will also be used to prepare the Dutch government's contribution to the follow-up of the Fourth UN Women's Conference at the Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations, which will take place in June 2000.

## **V.3. Interdepartmental action plan on emancipation**

The coalition agreement states that each ministry must draft an action plan containing at least three specific tasks relating to the implementation and application of emancipation policy to be carried out during the government's current term in office.

The aim of these action plans is to encourage each ministry to exercise individual responsibility for promoting emancipation in its own area of competence, with a view to mainstreaming emancipation policy. Ministries have been implementing their own emancipation policies for some time now. As a result, the role of the Co-ordinating State Secretary for Emancipation policy is gradually moving towards monitoring the results of internal and external emancipation policy, stimulating innovative measures and co-ordinating the main lines of the government's nation-wide emancipation policy. In the light of these developments, the government felt that new instruments were needed. The interministerial action plan on emancipation is one such instrument.

The ministries are focusing on a range of different topics that tie in closely with their core tasks. Some of these topics give an added boost to themes which have been on the political agenda for some time, such as moves to increase the number of women in decision-making bodies in the ministry's specific area of competence. Other themes are relatively new, as the following three examples show. One is the launch of an interdepartmental strategy to devise an 'availability scenario' as an alternative to the organisation of work based on the physical presence of individuals. In addition to the reallocation of paid work and unpaid care between men and women, this scenario centres on measures to reduce commuting and energy consumption and to encourage the further use of new information and communication technology. The second example focuses on the role of the Netherlands in international fora. The Minister for Development Co-operation is setting aside extra funding for the

protection of the reproductive rights of female refugees, while the Ministry of Justice has added the development of a plan of action against domestic violence to its own portfolio.

These emancipation tasks must however meet a number of specific criteria. They must, for example:

1. Be quantifiable;
2. Be achieved within four years;
3. Tie in with the main themes of the ministry's policy;
4. Tie in with the government's existing emancipation policy;
5. Be designed primarily to have an impact on society.

The ministries have also been asked to consider the recommendations of the Daily Routine Committee when preparing and selecting their emancipation tasks.

#### **V.4. The Daily Routine Incentive Scheme**

The recommendations made by the Daily Routine Committee led, among other things, to the Daily Routine Incentive Scheme, which the government decided to implement in 1998. NLG 60 million was allocated to this scheme over a four-year period. The scheme was launched in March 1999.

The Daily Routine Incentive Scheme funds experiments and encourages the exchange of information and 'good practice'. The purpose of these experiments is to achieve a better match between working hours and the opening times of schools, childcare facilities, shops and other facilities. This will improve access to these facilities and result in a better balance between work and domestic life. The results of these experiments will be applied to future policy.

#### **V.5. Paid work and unpaid Care Policy Document**

At the beginning of 1999, the Co-ordinating State Secretary for Emancipation policy presented a policy document on paid work and unpaid care to parliament. This policy document contains proposals for devising, extending and relaxing rules governing leave from work. The aim is to make it easier to combine paid work and unpaid care. The term 'care' is broadly defined in the document. It covers leave to care for children or close family members as well as leave to pursue personal development, training or social activities. The policy document specifies how existing barriers to the redistribution of paid work and unpaid care may be overcome.

Many of the proposals made in the policy document will ultimately need to be incorporated into the Work and Care Act, which will combine and co-ordinate all existing and new leave schemes. The result will be a cohesive law regulating all the various forms of leave. The Act will also contain a clause giving an entitlement to part-time work which will tie in with the existing labour market situation and working patterns, and with contemporary forms of upbringing and care. The underlying principle of the Act is that men and women should combine paid work and unpaid care equally. The Bill therefore ensures that the unutilised capacities of women for performing paid work and the capacities of men for performing unpaid care will be more fully exploited. The government will consult all stakeholders concerning these proposals, including employers' organisations, trade unions, benefit claimants and the women's movement.

#### **V.6. Policy initiatives to break through the 'glass ceiling'**

Measures to break through the 'glass ceiling' have very quickly made their way onto the national and international political agenda. Not only in the market sector, but also in the collective sector, the percentage of women at higher (decision making) positions remains low. This is the same for women at senior positions in public administration, politics, industry and academic life. The government will therefore continue to take specific measures to increase the representation of women in these spheres. Efforts in this area will be intensified in partnership with Toplink, Opportunity in Business and the social partners. More in-depth research will be carried out on the underlying reasons why women are prevented from progressing to senior positions in public administration, academic life and the private sector.

### **V.7. Emancipation and the younger generation in the 21st century**

As the 21st century draws nearer, it is important to know to what extent the '1990 generation' (those who turned 18 in 1990) have achieved economic self-sufficiency. In principle, the government no longer applies the traditional 'social contract' to this generation. This means that an unemployed or disabled breadwinner will not be entitled to an additional increment on top of his or her benefit if his or her dependent partner was born after 31 December 1971 and there are no children below the age of 12. The Emancipation Monitor will evaluate the degree of economic self-sufficiency of this generation. Specific attention will also need to be given to the status of girls from ethnic minority backgrounds, who are frequently faced with conflicting patterns of expectation. The role of these girls could be crucial in the creation of social cohesion in a multicultural society, according to the coalition agreement.

### **V.8. Appointment of a national rapporteur on trafficking in women**

One key recommendation made in the Hague Declaration on combating trafficking in women was the setting up of a monitoring system. It has emerged that in many countries - and at international level - there is no comprehensive overview of data on trafficking in women and on ways to prevent and combat this practice. It is insufficiently clear whether the measures taken so far to prevent and combat trafficking in women will give the desired effect. Partly for this reason, the Declaration calls for the appointment of a national rapporteur to register and process this data.

The Dutch government is currently making preparations to appoint a national rapporteur on trafficking in women. This national rapporteur will report to the government on developments affecting the extent and nature of forms of sexual exploitation, notably with regard to women and children. He or she will also be expected to investigate the effects of the policy measures taken to prevent and combat this practice and to submit recommendations for improvements. The national rapporteur's area of research will therefore not only cover trafficking in women but also topics not addressed in specific detail by the Hague Declaration. This area of research can be further adapted following an evaluation. An interim evaluation will be conducted after two and four years respectively.

The practical content and organisation of the mandate for a national rapporteur was prepared by the Department for the Co-ordination of Emancipation Policy and the Ministries of Justice, Health, Welfare and Sport, the Interior and Kingdom Relations and Foreign Affairs. This approach also ensures the mainstreaming of emancipation policy.

### **V.9. Emancipation Monitor**

The Emancipation Monitor has been described in various policy documents as a key instrument for the government's interdepartmental emancipation policy. It is intended as an information system providing data on aspects of the emancipation process within society. The purpose of the monitor will be to periodically chart developments in a number of key areas in order to assess the progress of the emancipation process within society. It will serve as a 'barometer' for policy and it can also be consulted by parliament and the public at large. Data compiled by the monitor can be used as an 'eye opener', prompting others to take action, or it can serve as a source of information, for example for periodic reporting obligations at national or international level.

The added value of an emancipation monitor is chiefly to provide a general picture of developments in the main areas of emancipation policy. It can, for example, offer a comprehensive overview of emancipation policy and allow links to be established between developments in different areas. This will make it possible to regularly take stock of the progress of emancipation policy as a whole. The government has begun preparations for an emancipation monitor in four areas which tie in with what have been key focus areas for emancipation policy for some time. These are:

- a) Paid work, unpaid care and income;
- b) Education;
- c) Political and community-based decision-making;
- d) Violence against women.

The 1999 Emancipation Yearbook will include an update on the progress of Monitor.

#### **V.10. Development co-operation**

Following consultations with the women's movement in the countries concerned, the Dutch government decided to concentrate its development co-operation activities on six of the twelve critical areas of concern cited in the *Platform for Action*. These areas are: women and poverty, notably the right and access to natural resources such as land and water, education, reproductive health and rights, combating violence against women, women and armed conflict, and women in power and decision-making. The Netherlands is also contributing to the development of *national machineries*, both in international fora (UN, World Bank, IMF, EU) and in partnership with national governments. The evaluation of the emancipation component in Dutch development co-operation in 1998 concluded that there is still a long way to go in achieving material equality and removing structural and cultural obstacles in recipient countries. There are still far fewer women taking part in aid programmes than men, both among the beneficiaries and the implementing agencies. The Dutch government's current strategy of concentrating aid on a small number of sectors in a few countries could be detrimental to women. It has therefore decided that an effective gender policy in recipient countries should be one of the selection criteria for the concentration of aid. In the autumn of 1999, when the government comes to choose the relevant sectors in the selected countries, it will give priority to those sectors which promote the emancipation of women.